

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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The Lost Sock.....p.10

An Easter Dialogue:
The Sinner p. 17



58th year of publication

Christian Peacemakers witnessed war in Iraq

Alan Doerksen

AMMAN, Jordan – As the war with Iraq continues, members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) have decided to leave the country temporarily, after spending many days in Baghdad, at the heart of the action. But team members plan to return to Iraq as soon as possible.

In March and early April, CPT members based in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq sent out first-hand reports about how the war has been affecting the people of Iraq.

Helping people understand

Doug Pritchard, CPT's Toronto-based Canadian co-ordinator, told Canadian Press he believes the activists have had an important impact "in helping people to understand the condition of the people (in Iraq). Our hope is that... the reports from Iraq and the presence of people like ours are contributing to a more selective targeting and greater concern for the civilian population," he said in late March.

On April 1, eight remaining CPT members left Iraq and traveled to Amman, Jordan. The CPT team decided to leave Baghdad for a

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COURTESY CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS

Christian peacemaker team members hold a prayer vigil at an Iraqi sewage treatment plant in Basrah.

number of reasons: food was becoming increasingly scarce, travel within the city was difficult, and telephone links to the outside world were bombed out. They decided that having 25 CPT and the associated Chicago-based Iraq Peace Team

(IPT) people doing the little work that was still possible was a poor use of resources. "Everyone in Baghdad is making cutbacks, so we decided to cut back too," reported CPTer Scott Kerr. Twelve members of IPT remain in Baghdad.

"Six of our people have remained in Amman in hopes that they can return" to Iraq to provide an ongoing presence and witness, Pritchard told *Christian Courier*. They have been invited by Archbishop Kuttab of Basrah to visit his city in southern Iraq. Or they may go back to a clinic in Al Rutbah, mentioned below.

Expelled from Baghdad

Just two days earlier, on March 29, seven other CPT members – all U.S. citizens – were expelled from Baghdad by the Iraqi government. When asked by CPT's Chicago office about the possible reasons for the expulsion, team member Cliff Kindy, 53, (of North Manchester, Indiana) described the intense level of anxiety throughout Baghdad. The government "minder" assigned to their group ordered the expulsion after team members walked from their hotel to a meeting in another hotel, documenting the destruction in the streets along the way. The minder's own house had also been hit by bombs the previous night.

CPT suggests that the Iraqi government was concerned that photos the CPT delegation were taking might be used by U.S.

intelligence. Iraq has been burning oil around Baghdad trying to interfere with U.S. satellite photography of the damage caused by its bombing. However, at the time of the team's departure, they were still mostly experiencing great hospitality and friendship from ordinary Iraqis, reports CPT. Kindy reported that "the road from Baghdad to the border was clear." However, one of their taxis blew a tire on the highway and rolled into a ditch injuring Kindy and two others. The driver thought that the wheel had been shot by a nearby U.S. or British plane, but the group thinks it was just as likely that the tire was destroyed by shrapnel or debris on the road from earlier air strikes. The passengers were all bruised and badly shaken, but all were conscious. The car was totaled.

Because of the intensive U.S./British bombing, there were few other vehicles on the road. The group was just beginning to panic, when a car approached, pulled over and the Iraqi driver asked if he could help. He packed the five additional passengers into his car and drove to the closest Iraqi town, Ar Rutbah about six km from the site of the

See IRAQI page 2...

Should the government redefine the nature of marriage?

Harry der Nederlanden

"Marriage is not simply what a man and woman do, it is an institution that provides an enduring and exclusive sexual bonding of male and female that has the capacity to procreate and provides the biological tie between children and parents," argued Bruce Clemenger of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in Ottawa. "The difference and uniqueness of marriage should be recognized in law and public policy."

Not too many years ago these words would have seemed too obvious to need saying. The federal Standing Committee on Justice and



COURTESY EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA
Bruce Clemenger

Human Rights is asking Canadians for their views about lifting the ban

on same-sex marriages. The government is reacting to court rulings. There have been three court cases – in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia – that have challenged this definition of marriage. In all three cases judges ruled that the opposite-sex definition of marriage was discriminatory. Only one, the B.C. case, found that the discrimination was justifiable.

Change rooted in Charter

The rulings, the latest by the Ontario Superior Court last summer, said that Canada's traditional definition of marriage is unconstitutional because it offends the equality provisions of the Charter of

Rights and Freedoms. Because marriage is presently defined as "a voluntary union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others," the Ontario Court stated that it improperly excluded same-sex unions from the institution of marriage. The Court has ordered the Parliament of Canada to change the legal definition of marriage and all other related laws to include homosexual unions.

The pressure for the redefinition of marriage, therefore, seems to come from the charter of Rights and Freedoms. At the time the Charter was enacted in 1982, politicians said it would protect the values of Canadians. In this case, however,

many are complaining that a liberal judiciary is using the Charter to dissolve something they consider fundamental to human society. The judges are reading into the Charter something our elected officials originally pledged was not implied by the Charter.

Although on June 8, 1999, Parliament voted 216-55 in favor of an Opposition motion that, "it is necessary, in light of public debate around recent court decisions, to state that marriage is and should remain the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, and that Parliament will take all necessary steps to preserve this

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News

Iraqi clinic generously helps American peacemakers

... continued from page 1
accident, and 140 km east of the Jordanian border.

Generous Iraqi doctor

The group was astounded to see that this town, with no apparent military structures, had been devastated by U.S./British bombing three days earlier. Much of the town was destroyed, including the children's hospital. Two children were killed in the bombing. The CPT group was taken to the only remaining medical facility in town, a six-metre by six-metre four-bed clinic.

The people of the town quickly gathered to inspect their uninvited foreign visitors. The group hastily offered everyone a copy the CPT handout, with a description of their work in Iraq, in English and Arabic. The people of Ar Rutbah then warmly welcomed the wounded Americans, just three days after their town had been destroyed by U.S./British bombers.

When the doctor arrived, he was professionally embarrassed. Because of the embargo and the destruction of their primary hospital three days earlier, many medications were unavailable. Some painkillers were on hand, but Kindy had to have the 10 stitches he needed to close the gash in his head



COURTESY CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS

CPT member Scott Kerr at a bomb site in Baghdad

without anesthesia.

Part of same family

By the time everyone in the group had been treated, the two other cars in their convoy had returned and found them.

The group warmly thanked the people of Ar Rutbah for their hospitality, and tried unsuccessfully to pay the clinic and doctor for their services.

The doctor said, "We treat everyone in our clinic: Muslim,

Christian, Iraqi or American. We all are part of the same family, you know."

"These Iraqis, whose hospital had just been destroyed by U.S. bombs, graciously dressed our wounds and gave us medicine, precious medicine from their supply which is very limited due to 12 years of economic sanctions," Kindy reported.

While in Baghdad a few days earlier, Kindy had visited wounded civilians at the downtown Yarmouk

Hospital. They had fallen victim to bombs aimed at government buildings in their neighborhood. Kindy met children who had suffered head injuries from pressure wave concussions, and others who had been wounded by flying shrapnel and glass. Describing the scene in Baghdad, he said, "There's a lot of smoke hanging over the city - from burning buildings and pits of burning oil. You can't escape from the reek of burning petroleum. The blackness in the sky looks like an approaching storm and blocks the sun."

Meanwhile, Stewart Vriesenga, a team member from Lucknow, Ont., held a vigil in a peace tent on the grounds of a water treatment facility which provides water to a nearby complex of eight hospitals. American and Canadian officials were alerted that CPT was maintaining a presence there, and that it is against international law to bomb civilian targets.

Phone contact lost

On March 28, CPT lost phone contact with its team members in Baghdad because the city's main telephone facility had been bombed. The U.S. had dropped two 2,100 kg "bunker-busting" bombs on a communications tower on the east side of the Euphrates River and

destroyed a seven-storey telephone exchange, disrupting service to much of Baghdad, reported AP. "The targeting of essential civilian facilities is reprehensible and contrary to international law," asserted Pritchard.

Writing to governments

Besides sending team members to Iraq, CPT has also sent letters to the governments of Iraq, the U.S. and other interested countries, stating their position regarding the war and advising the governments of their presence in Iraq and reasons for that.

Spelling out its reasons for being in Iraq, CPT explained in the letters: "As long as we can stay in Iraq, we will:

- seek to expose the criminality of war;
- befriend, comfort, and share the risks of non-governmental, unarmed Iraqis;
- serve witness against "Shock and Awe";
- serve and be helpful before, during and after any escalation of violence;
- respond non-violently and respectfully to all people, including those with whom we disagree.

Agencies defend traditional definition of marriage

... continued from page 1

definition of marriage in Canada," it is now seriously considering redefining marriage to allow for same-sex unions.

Many individuals and organizations have submitted papers to be read before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which has been holding hearings across the country. Besides the EFC, the Catholic Bishops, the CRC Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) and Gerald Vandezande also recently presented papers.

It is important to remember that the issue is not about the morality of homosexual behavior; it is about legal rights, so the debates about homosexuality that have been going on in the church have only an indirect relationship to this one. None of the four papers mentioned address the morality of homosexuality or of homosexual partnerships; they simply assume that there are other kinds of enduring relationships that ought to be protected by legislation. What each paper addresses is a number of proposals put forward by the government to address the issue of equality before the law. One of them

suggested redefining marriage to include same-sex unions.

The presentations of both the EFC and Catholic Bishops give eloquent descriptions of marriage and why they must be between a man and a woman. They point out that this has been so at all times and in all places. It is, they argue, a universal reality rooted in human nature. Not just Christians, but Judaism, Islam and all religions consider marriage divinely ordained.

Glancing at the legal tradition of Canada and England and everywhere else in the world, the EFC points out that until last year no court anywhere ever found "that the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman was discriminatory."

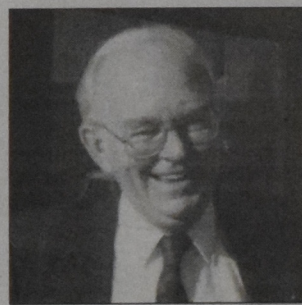
Protecting Pluralism

The submissions by Gerald Vandezande and the CCG take a very different approach. Although they also point out the differences between marriage and whatever other kinds of relationships need protection by law, their focus is elsewhere.

The CCG paper devotes little

space to spelling out the characteristics and benefits of marriage. The first and strongest part of the paper is devoted to making a case that "interdependent relationships that involve sexual intimacy," that is, same-sex relationships, are just as deserving of legal recognition and protection as marriage. "Government is obliged to make legal provision for couples who enter into intimate and long-term interdependent relationships." This obligation is rooted in justice. In fact, the paper says that to deny to same sex couples the kind of legal recognition accorded to marriage is to deny to them civil and social rights, which the Synod of the CRC has declared to be unjust.

The paper goes further. It spells out what the CRC considers to be the duty of the government and the law: it is there to conciliate interests and to address new realities. Its purpose is not to absolutize rights, because absolutizing cuts off the open-ended process of communal reflection and conciliation. The main theme is: "Diversity is not served . . . by enforcing artificial uniformity . . . Equality among communities and cultures is



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Gerald Vandezande

achieved through respect and protection of uniqueness, not by requiring those cultures to conform or redefine themselves, to a standard pattern."

In short, the CCG paper goes out of its way to give a Christian rationale for making laws that will further promote and protect a multicultural society. The title of the paper is: "Same-sex Unions: A Case for a Just Pluralism." While the papers of the EFC and the Catholic Bishops take as their primary purpose to witness to the nature of marriage, those by Vandezande and the CCG take as their mandate to

witness to the nature of justice in a pluralistic society.

CCG agrees with courts

They argue that the courts are right - that it is discriminatory to provide the protection of law to marriage but not to other kinds of stable, long-term relationships, including but not limited to same-sex unions. However, it would also be a violation of pluralism and of justice if the government passed laws that dissolved the traditional model of marriage held dear by Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and others.

Because they are responding to a government initiative that proposes four different models, all four papers opt for the model that keeps the heterosexual definition of marriage, suggesting indeed that since marriage is not a creation of government, it cannot be redefined by it either, and that adds another category of relationships that would also be granted protection by law. Vandezande and the CCG suggests that certain kinds of legal protection ought also to be extended to brothers and sisters who continue to live together as a family.

Politics

Problems with American unilateral foreign policy

In 1997 a group of conservative American intellectuals and political leaders established the Project for the New American Century. Bill Clinton was still in the White House, and their perception was that U.S. foreign and defence policies were adrift under his leadership. The Cold War had ended nearly a decade before, the Soviet Union was no more, and the United States was the world's remaining superpower, possessing an unprecedented and nearly unchallenged capacity to influence events around the globe.

Among those signing the organization's Statement of Principles were Florida Governor Jeb Bush, son of former President George Bush and brother to the now current president; Dan Quayle, vice president under the elder Bush; Dick Cheney, current vice president; and Donald Rumsfeld, now Secretary of Defence.

The Project aimed to resurrect the elements of what they saw as the successful policies of the Reagan administration, namely, a strong military capacity, an assertive foreign policy promoting American principles throughout the world, and an acceptance of that country's global responsibilities. Their goal was that the United States should be able, not simply to respond to crises, but to anticipate them and to address them in advance before they become intractable.

UN ignored

Conspicuous by its absence was the United Nations, which went unmentioned in this Statement. This seemingly deliberate oversight would be partially rectified in future statements, although they would mention the world body only in passing and with the understanding that it would play an ancillary role at most in the new century.

Much has changed in the past six years. George W. Bush came to the White House in 2001, amid promises of implementing something called "compassionate conservatism" on the domestic front. Because Bush had been governor of Texas and was thus untested in the international arena, he was not expected to alter dramatically the course of American foreign policy. Later that year, of course, the U.S. was attacked on its own soil by al-Qaeda terrorists, an event that would change everything. Over the next slightly more than 18 months that country would fight two fairly brief wars to unseat two unquestionably vicious régimes.

The initial military action in Afghanistan caused some

controversy both at home and abroad, though less than one might have expected. This was primarily because the U.S. was battling a régime wilfully harboring a suspected mass murderer and refusing to turn him over to American authorities to receive justice. In short, a strong case was to be made that the U.S. was defending itself in the wake of an egregious attack on innocents. Legitimate self-defence does not require international approval, either by allies or by the UN.

Selling job a miserable failure

However, Iraq was different. To begin with, there was no obvious connection between the Islamism of al-Qaeda and the secular nationalism of Iraq's Baath Party. Moreover, Saddam Hussein was not immediately implicated in the September 11 attacks, as was Osama bin Laden. Finally, unlike Afghanistan, Iraq is in the heart of one of the most politically volatile regions of the world. In short, Americans had a selling job to do to persuade the rest of the world that their interests were somehow at stake in that faraway country.

Needless to say, the Bush administration failed miserably in this effort. Whatever the wisdom of fighting Saddam's régime, the U.S. did not convince much of the rest of the world. Moreover, given the obvious influence on Bush of the Project for the New American Century, he did not appear to believe he was obligated to do so.

Join our side or else

Newsweek's Fareed Zakaria describes the general climate in which administration officials have related to real and potential allies around the world. He reports that governments in a number of foreign capitals have felt bullied and humiliated by American envoys. Rumsfeld's favored policy appears to be one of intimidating friend and foe alike. "Come on side of our agenda, or else," seems to be the strategy. Little effort has been expended in cultivating good will abroad. Other nations appear to be viewed from Washington as potential obstacles to America's interests, and not as genuine political communities concerned to do justice to their own legitimate interests.

Moreover, even if one takes seriously the Bush administration's aspirations for a constitutional, democratic and stable Iraq, there is more than a measure of naïveté in this expectation. The assumption seems to be that a world of democracies will almost naturally support America's self-defined global interests. In the real world, however, democracy means that an electorate genuinely free to choose its own leaders may opt for policies running counter to those of the U.S.

Democracy at worst

At worst, a democratic election in Iraq could bring to power Islamists, that is, the very people who are supportive of al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

Furthermore, many of the



Principalsities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

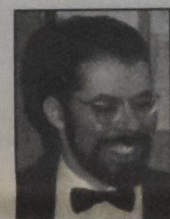
countries that have opposed the American attack on Iraq have done so because their own people have overwhelmingly opposed it. Turkey's parliament voted in impeccably democratic fashion not to allow the U.S. to use its territory to launch a northern invasion into Iraq. American officials were angry at this, but this is what democracy is all about. Surely they would not have wished the Ankara government to ignore its own parliament?

There is another factor that the Bush administration ignores in its hopes for a democratic Iraq, and this oversight makes the President look very nearly like a naïve liberal, somewhat ironically. Constitutional democracy requires supportive traditions, the absence of which will make efforts to implement it at least very difficult, if not impossible. To be sure, Germany and Japan were able to join the ranks of democratic nations against long odds following the Second World War. On this basis one can say that a democratic Iraq is theoretically possible.

Yet what we in the west think of as democracy is less a matter of holding elections than of maintaining a constitutional government that recognizes its own limitations, protects the rights of citizens even against democratic majorities, and respects the plethora of non-state communal formations that collectively have come to be called civil society. Creating such a

government on the ruins of a totalitarian state whose people are accustomed to living in terror is not a promising prospect. At the very least it will take more than American good intentions, and it will almost certainly require the assistance of those very allies whom the U.S. for the time being has effectively estranged.

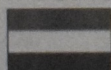
Over the long term, the U.S. will not be able to maintain the sort of unilateralist foreign policy envisioned by the Project for the New American Century. Alienating real and potential allies – not to mention making new enemies – will not make for a safer world; it will more likely make for a United States spread far too thin, deeply in debt, and very much on its own.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and is happy to see Saddam Hussein out of power in Iraq.

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Editorials

‘Watch your tongue’

Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmaat

“Watch your tongue,” said our mothers when we were young. James ups the ante and tells us that “the tongue is a fire,” it is a “world of iniquity” that “stains the whole body” and “sets on fire the cycle of nature” (3.6). The psalms apply the warning to empire – beware of the wicked nations who speak lies in order to make war and oppress the poor (Psalms 10, 59, 140).

The warning to watch our tongues is not just individual, but social and political: does our rhetoric challenge the sovereignty of God? Is language like “Operation Infinite Justice” blasphemous? Do bombs really ensure “Enduring Freedom” and “Shock and Awe” or is it only the graciousness and holiness of God that bring freedom and awe into our hearts?

Rhetoric of ‘liberation’

When we thrill to the rhetoric of “liberation” in a phrase like, “the liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world, it is God’s gift to the world” [President Bush], we need to ask ourselves, who is this liberty and freedom we prize really for? Supporting dictatorships around the world has been common U.S. foreign policy for decades (including Saddam himself in the ‘80s). So it hasn’t been the liberty of oppressed peoples, but rather our liberty that has been our concern, especially the liberty of insatiable consumption.

But it isn’t just that the language of liberation and freedom is deliberately twisted that makes such claims iniquitous – it is also the blasphemous arrogance of it all. Our understanding of liberty is God’s gift to the world! The Pax Americana is a divine destiny that has called on the right people and the right president at the

right time.

If the rhetoric is false, if the political tongue is “on fire,” then why did the American empire go to war against Iraq? Is it because of 9/11? The U.S. intelligence machine has not been able to produce one shred of evidence to connect Iraq with the tragic events of that day. Is it because Saddam Hussein is a villainous dictator who uses chemical weapons on his own people? While the evidence supports this, it was with materials supplied by the United States and with the full knowledge of the Reagan White House that Saddam used chemical weapons on the Iranians as early as 1983 and on the Kurds in 1987. Why was he not stopped then?

‘Operation Imperial Oil’

Or would “Operation Imperial Oil” be a more honest description of this war? Perhaps. But in the end, any rhetoric that is haughty and boastful, that invents evil and is full of murder and strife, any language that results in actions that are heartless and ruthless, in short, any language that results in war solely for the sake of imperial

expansion, betrays a fundamental unfaithfulness before God.

It is such language that the church is called to expose. Our calling, living at the heart of the empire, is to hold the language and the actions of the empire up to the uncompromising light of the gospel. Our calling is to uncover the lies, expose the rhetoric and symbols of the empire that lead only to death, and hold up the symbols and images of a different kingdom, a Prince of Peace who promised shalom and forgiveness to those who walk the path of suffering servanthood. For in the end, it is only the truth of a cross-shaped community that will truly set us free.

Not subject to the rhetoric of the Pax Americana, we attempt to speak the truth with the vocabulary of the Kingdom.

*Brian Walsh is a CRC Campus Minister at the University of Toronto
Sylvia Keesmaat is the Senior Member in Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.*

Humans in danger of playing god

Harry DerNederlanden

My editorial of March 31, I’ve come to realize, was misread by quite a few readers. Some took it to be in praise and admiration of the idealism of George Bush and company. I did say there is something admirable and noble in risking so much for the sake of high ideals. But when I ended by pointing out that what Bush is undertaking in the Middle East is “a godlike task,” I meant that to be heard as criticism. When we humans take on ourselves godlike tasks, we are in danger of playing god. What tempts us to do so is faith in something other than the power of the Kingdom – such as faith in the power of a human system or ideology to transform the international order.

World is swarming with false gods

I want to leave that as a question rather than as an accusation. This world is swarming with false gods and at different times anyone who speaks in the public square may find himself speaking words and following a course at odds with his biblical faith. Someone who is leaning to the left will find it easy to spot the little red guy with the pitchfork whispering into George Bush’s right ear. Someone leaning to the right will wonder whether the majority of the clergy in the mainline denominations have been seduced by a political theology that would judge even Jesus by his enthusiasm for a welfare-state agenda.

That leaves the middle – always hard to distinguish from complacency or indifference.

Because I’ve not been able to mount a great deal of enthusiasm and rhetoric either for or against Bush’s policies, some have suggested this is lukewarmness or fence-sitting.

However, as I see it, we must only choose between left and right if the line of the antithesis runs between these two. One of the things I see happening in America but also in Canada is Christians in great numbers assuming that the choice posed in the public square between right and left coincides with the choice posed by the Word of God.

By conjuring with the language of good and evil, George Bush at times slips into this error. But he’s hardly alone. Many of the political diatribes from the Christian

right paint the left as a profoundly corrupt and corrupting spiritual force. Bill Clinton embodied for them everything that was rotten in America. Much of this is political rhetoric, of course, to be taken with a grain of salt. But when people speak with such a deep passion, they are usually speaking of what is closest to their heart.

The same is true of those who speak from the left of the political spectrum. They tend to judge a politician by how much he or she is willing to transfer from the military and space budgets to the welfare budget. To them the Christianity of George Bush (and most Republicans) is deeply suspect because he is not showing his concern for the poor and the marginalized in a country rolling in wealth. If they don’t demonize Bush, they are quite sure he has been corrupted by his contact with wealth, oil and Texas.

Demonic forces at work

Since there are demonic forces at work everywhere, I’m not at all surprised that we can detect them on both the right and the left. (The middle has no soul, so it cannot accommodate demons.)

It doesn’t take a genius to discern suspect motives and idolatrous ideals to the left, to the right, in the middle, behind us, before us, beneath us and above us. C.S. Lewis, indeed, suggests that even this can be the work of old Screwtape.

But praise God, who has not abandoned us to our own basest impulses, the Spirit is at work on the left as well as on the right. So we need not demonize either. But neither need we take our marching orders from either side.

Yes, George Bush mobilized great forces to confront and destroy a great evil in Saddam. So we can rejoice at the liberation of the Iraqis. But let’s not blind ourselves to the dangers that lurk in those very ideals that sent great armies to go out into distant byways to forcibly invite Arab neighbors to the great feast.

Was it to the wedding feast of the Lamb or to the wedding feast of democracy and global capitalism?

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EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Editor: Harry der Nederlanden editor@christiancourier.ca;
Journalist, Layout Designer: Alan Doerksen

journal@christiancourier.ca;

Circulation: Rose der Nederlanden

Subscriptions@christiancourier.ca;

Accounts/Advertising Manager: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer
accounts@christiancourier.ca

REGIONAL REPORTERS

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Letters

Response from First CRC Toronto re. homosexuals

Note from Stated Clerk: On October 10, 2002, Council of Toronto First CRC distributed an Open Pastoral Letter to explain seven decisions the congregation made on September 29, 2002. In response the Council received over 50 communications from individuals, congregations, and classes. Classis Toronto itself also received more than 30 communications, and on January 23, 2003, made four decisions to which Toronto First CRC was requested to respond in writing by the time the Agenda for the May 22, 2003 Classis was to be published. What follows is Toronto First CRC's written response, submitted to Classis Toronto on April 8, 2003.

Dear brothers and sisters of Classis Toronto:

We are aware that our decisions of Fall, 2002, regarding inclusivity represent a unique perspective within the denomination. Synod 2002 called on all members of our

denomination to show willingness to hear diverse perspectives (pp. 5-6, "Pastoral Care for Homosexual Members: Reports of 1973 and 2002"). We ask that Classis Toronto hear our testimony before judging us.

Because our decision-making process was primarily internal, addressing very specific pastoral issues, we did not share this process with our sister churches in Classis Toronto. While we have had some encouraging assurances, we were taken aback by the vehemence expressed and anguish experienced within the denomination. We feel sorry about the distress and sorrow that our decisions have caused throughout the denomination.

A summary of our internal process

As a community we have been struggling since the mid-1970s over how best to minister in a pastoral way to those in our church who are gay and lesbian or who have homosexual family members. Our congregation engaged

in a lengthy process of Biblical study, dialogue, and debate regarding our relationship with our gay and lesbian members. As our gay brothers and lesbian sisters continued to be powerful and persistent examples of Christ-like love among us, the burden of not including them fully into our worshipping community began to weigh more heavily. This struggle came to a head for us in 2001, when our congregation was asked to consider for call a gay, celibate pastor. A narrow vote against calling him propelled our congregation into a crisis that threatened our ability to survive as a community.

Our intention in the last two years has been to first of all address our own painful pastoral issues. Out of our struggle with this matter and our own recent healing process came the difficult decision to become a more inclusive, safe church. We shared this decision in our Pastoral Letter of October 2002, and the steps leading to this decision are in our document, "Some historical notes on Inclusivity at First CRC Toronto" (available on request). For our

congregation, arriving at a clear decision on full inclusion brought a measure of internal peace.

Our response

First CRC requests Classis to allow us a period of 15 months to compile a document that articulates our position, with God's Word as our guide, and to compose a pastoral framework of ministry with people of same-sex orientation that would be in harmony with Synod's call for ministry, would honor the Great Commandment, and would restore to dignity those who have often been marginalized in our church. First CRC would report to Classis in September of 2004.

During those 15 months, we request that Classis Toronto encourage local congregations to see how they can best minister to gays and lesbians. We respectfully request that further discussion of and response to the January 2003 recommendations of Classis be postponed until September 2004.

Disappointed with loss of Hielema

I am writing this letter to express my disappointment and disgust with the loss and editing of Bert Hielema's column. I am disappointed that Bert will no longer be a part of Christian Courier, when we receive our copy his is the column I turn to first.

Whether I agree with him or not is beside the point, his passionate columns encouraged me to read the rest of the paper. I have been increasingly disgusted with editorials that have been following Bert's columns of late, mostly because it would seem that the editor has no confidence in my intelligence. I believe that most of your readers have the intelligence to pick apart his "diatribes of personal opinion" and take from them kernels, if not nuggets, of truth.

The columns always got me thinking and would sometimes cause me to do some research myself. Regardless of how much his columns were colored by his personal opinion, they made the reader think on issues that are usually swept under the carpet or looked at with indifference. One thing you can not say about Bert was that he is indifferent.

Bert, I for one, want to continue reading your columns, so if you could send them to me by email, I would appreciate it. I would also like to read the column that the editor decided was too hard for me to digest intellectually, you know, the one that got canned from the March 17 paper. The *Christian Courier* will now be a much less enjoyable read for me.

Denise Neutel,
Ancaster, Ontario

Reply

I did not discontinue Bert Hielema's column, he chose to do so himself after I did not accept two of them. In my judgment they transgressed the boundaries of responsible journalism.

Over the years many readers have complained vehemently about Bert's opinion pieces and some have even canceled subscriptions in protest.

Others tell me that Bert's column is the first thing they read when they receive CC and think I'm a nitwit for giving him a hard time. The letters for and against are still arriving.

I have never held back any of Bert's columns because I disagreed with them; as long as they focused on issues, they were published.

However, an editor does have responsibilities toward his readers and toward the people who are the subject of the stories. If there are errors of fact, obvious distortions, wrong attributions, blatant misrepresentations and slanderous statements made about persons, an editor must intervene. Bert made assertions about the beliefs of George Bush that were not supported, that were self-con-

tradictory, and that I know to be wrong. A Christian newspaper at the very least has the duty to be careful about a person's reputation.

There are limits even to the expression of opinion. All newspapers, except perhaps papers like *The National Enquirer*, demand a certain level of accountability from their writers. Large newspapers even have lawyers on staff. A Christian newspaper must be even more careful in striving to be fair.

I would not be doing my job as an editor if I left it wholly up to CC readers to sort out fact from error or fiction. Editors are a fact of life in journalism, and there are always points of tension and disagreement between writers and editors. Bert did not agree with my judgment. Since there are few hard and fast rules to apply, I don't claim to be infallible here. But I must apply my own best judgment.

I regret Bert's departure, but I see no reason he should be exempt from the standards applied to the rest of our writers.

Harry der Nederlanden
Editor

Revealing our culture's fallacies

In the confusion and uncertainty of our times, many opinions are expressed by representatives of the Church about what should drive us, in judging the political and cultural conflicts of today.

Often, these expressions raise more questions in the minds of Christian believers, because Christian faith and theology tends to adjust and fall in line with the prevailing view points of our culture.

Taking a critical look

In the quest to give leadership in these cultural problems of war, multiculturalism, homosexuality, etc., we tend to fall into the trap of becoming involved in the power struggles of this world. In contrast, the calling of leaders in the Church of Christ is to unmask the fallacies of our culture. If we take a critical look at what the Church should say, we have to do so confessing that the God who created this world, in Christ has come to rescue us and

through his Spirit leads to eternal life.

This knowledge causes us to examine two pertinent questions:

1. Do our opinions make clear what the Bible teaches and do we unmask the lies of our culture or are we expressing a religious philosophical or even political point of view?

2. Are our expressions in unity with our faith? If not, then we may have a respectable religion but please do not consider it to be consistent with or an extension of the historical Church of Christ.

The difficulty lies in the connections made between worldly power and culture on the one hand and with faith on the other.

We live in a world of progress and most of us enjoy its benefits. Within the dream of the cultural power structures, we promote the Western ideals of prosperity, freedom, emancipation and independence. In this process, the Christian Church has often added

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Letters/Opinion

Questioning Antonides' view on Iraq

I would like to address some points in Harry Antonides' article "Peace, peace, but there is no peace" (CC, March 31). I have problems with the WCC and Mr. Antonides using Scripture to back up their positions. What a travesty to use Isaiah 2:4 to justify no war, or Ecclesiastes 3:8 to justify war, or Matthew 10:34 to justify punishment of evildoers.

But let's move on to point one in his article: Mr. Antonides says: "Governments are instituted for...the punishment of wrongdoers." And therefore, it is correct for America to punish the wrongdoers that destroyed the World Trade Center. Was Iraq solely responsible for 9/11? If not, are there not a number of other Middle Eastern countries that are equally guilty? Mr. Antonides goes on to say that the argument for war (on Iraq) is complicated because the transgressor, the enemy, is a "Hydra headed monster with many poisoned tentacles...in more than 60 countries." So why not attack all of them as well?

Seizing control

Perhaps there are other motives here, such as seizing control of that area of the Middle East?

Mr. Antonides states that there is one indisputable fact: "War was declared on America...on Sept. 11, 2001." And he goes on to say that the only effective counter measure is military force, etc.

Wait a minute. Wasn't the World Trade Center bombed already in 1993 by Muslim extremists? Didn't the battleship Cole get bombed in Yemen, again by Muslim extremists? It seems to me that the U.S. then used Iraq as a scapegoat, to get back at the Muslim extremists.

However, let's remember two facts: 1. Iraq was one of the most secular states in the Middle East, i.e. not full of Muslim extremists, and 2. the Bush regime had full intentions to depose Saddam Hussein long before 9/11.

I don't doubt for a moment that the regimes in both Iraq and Iran are sympathetic to the terrorists. Some concrete evidence of this would probably have convinced many other countries (including Canada) to join the U.S. But without the evidence, the facts, I have to assume that the Bush administration has other motives.

Reign of terror

On to point 2 in Antonides' article: that Saddam Hussein's regime is a reign of terror. Unquestionably. I simply cannot get a grip on the utter horror and fear that his savagery must have engendered in the people of Iraq. But Mr. Antonides goes on: "A further compelling reason to select Iraq as a target for military invasion... is that Saddam's regime is still in possession of... chemical and biological agents." If America is justified in attacking Iraq because the regime is brutal, kills millions, and possesses "weapons of mass destruction," then what about Cambodia, East Timor, Turkey, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, and, for that matter, China and Russia? Why didn't the U.S. intervene in those countries, if indeed they are so intent on ending reigns of terror.

The U.S. has a history of interfering in the world, and propping up regimes where and when its own interests are at stake. Some of this interference results in limited good; in others, well, witness Vietnam, Nicaragua, Guatemala,

Chile and Argentina. Read Doug Saunderson's article "Reckoning" in the Feb. 22, 2003 *Globe and Mail*. He talks about Walt Rostow, the father of 'bombing for progress'. Rostow advocated a line of thought that became the way official America saw the rest of the world throughout the 1950s and 1960s. His idea of progress was to use force if necessary to propel poorer (read less developed) nations into the 'Age of Mass Consumption'. I think there is a belief in the U.S. that their country is somehow a 'chosen nation', and also a belief in the guarantees of 'progress.' This belief is perhaps responsible for the 'idealism' that the editor mentions on page 4, and for the fact that they seem to be on a 'mission'.

Point 3 in Antonides' article: I agree with Mr. Antonides about the silly anti-American attitudes in Canada. We don't have to follow the U.S., lock-step, into the war, but we can see that they are hurting, and empathize with them. We certainly shouldn't ridicule them, even if we disagree with their actions. What happened on Sept. 11, 2001 was horrible, beyond belief. But the war

on terror is, or should be, a war on individuals and their organizations. Its success would best be assured, I believe, by using espionage and infiltration, by police action, and punishment meted out by a court. If the government of Iraq is directly responsible for the terrorist attacks, we should be shown these connections before giving our assent to this war. Without being shown these connections I believe Prime Minister Chretien is correct in not agreeing to join them in this war.

Therefore, yes, I am concerned about American unilateralism. And Christians certainly should make statements and be prophetic, as Bert Hielema often was. Mr. Antonides characterizes American "practical statecraft" as "making the hard decisions in a harsh and cruel world." That overlooks the fact that the Bush administration had full intentions of overthrowing the Iraqi regime long before 9/11. Far better that the UN, or NATO for that matter, had agreed before any military action was taken.

Demeaning comments

You conclude your article, Mr.

Antonides, by making some very strong comments about Jim Wallis, "the North American doyen of pacifism." Your comments are very demeaning. You use the words: ignorant, laughable advice, pathetic, and immoral. I find this unnecessarily inflammatory. Jim Wallis and the Sojourner's Magazine have brought to light much injustice, and exposed many inequitable policies of the U.S. In that respect, I would say they are a voice in the wilderness.

And you laugh at him for suggesting the use of "the methods of non-violent civil disobedience." Let's remember that it worked in the Philippines and in South Africa. Weren't prayer and peaceful demonstrations a significant part of the crumbling of the Iron Curtain? Those methods of protest suggested by Jim Wallis seem to me to be much closer to Jesus' teaching than waging war.

We'll miss your columns, Bert Hielema.

Andy Kramer,
London

Revealing our culture's fallacies

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its own progressive agenda with goals which are supposed to be focused on freedom, justice, righteousness and peace.

However history has shown that too often, well-intended Christians have created many wrecks and unchristian conflicts in the name of Christ. Apartheid, the crusades, and colonialism are typical examples of the many difficulties created when power structures and faith were too closely connected. It is not difficult to become confused in these situations, losing track of the true objectives of the Christian Church.

Therefore the voices of the leaders in the Church should clearly build up a faith awareness in the minds and hearts of the believers

instead of confusing them with political agendas which fall within the economical and political sphere.

The Calvinistic concept that life is religion, should not make us embrace the illusions of a United Nations world order.

Within the hierarchy of the Church, there has to be a focused clarity in expressing what Christ has called us to do. The Church exists by the grace of those that understand and maintain the unity of faith in the sanctity of Christ which goes beyond all worldly understanding. Christ is the only one who gives us new life in His world and at all levels of our endeavors.

F. J. Reinders,
Mississauga, Ont.

Reflections on working with Christian Courier

Alan Doerksen

On April 25, I will be completing my work as Journalist and Layout Designer at *Christian Courier* and moving on to start work as Staff Writer and Copy Editor at Christian Aid Mission - based in Fort Erie.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to work at *Christian Courier* for eight and a half years - since September 1994. I have learned much about Christian journalism and about the core beliefs of Reformed Christians during this time. I would like to say "Thank you" to each staff member I have worked with here. I have learned some good lessons from each of you.

Politics to bear hunting

I hope that you, our faithful readers, have appreciated the stories I have written over the past years for CC. It's been interesting to write hundreds of news stories about a wide range of topics - from politics to relief work to bear hunting - and stories with a comic twist for News Digest.

Over the past few years, our approach to layout has been changing, and I hope you have seen improvements in the quality of our newspaper's format. We've managed to switch over almost completely from traditional paste-up layout to electronic format. Our printing company, Oxford Web, has been helpful with this transition.

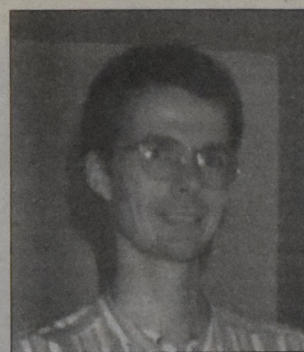


PHOTO COURTESY ALAN DOERKSEN

where traditional mission work is now banned or very limited by governments.

My work with Christian Aid will be focused on writing, editing and reporting for different mission publications, such as *Christian Mission* magazine, the *Christian Aid News Service (CANS)*, brochures and field reports. I will help get the message out to Canadians about what Christian Aid is doing to encourage the growth of Christianity throughout the world.

Christian Aid is a faith mission which depends on donations from supporters to do its work worldwide.

If you would like to consider becoming a prayer and financial supporter of Christian Aid, or receive more info about what the mission does, please contact its office for details at: 1-800-871-0882 (mentioning my name as a reference).

I see my work at Christian Aid as being a continuation of my career focus on Christian publication work. As I move on, I pray for God's richest blessings for the current staff of *Christian Courier*, the board of Reformed Faith Witness, and for each of you, our faithful readers.

Mission with a difference

Over the past year and a half, I have become familiar with the work of Christian Aid Mission around the world, and have written some stories about the mission for CC. You might recall stories I wrote about Freddie and Dorothy Sun, and their work encouraging Christians - often in dangerous situations - in China. Or Kaya Esen, the Turkish pastor who has started that country's first legal Bible bookstore - assisted by Christian Aid.

Christian Aid is a foreign mission board with a difference. Instead of sending Canadians to foreign countries as missionaries, the mission sends assistance to national believers, especially in poorer countries. This can be an advantage in nations such as China and India,

Sports

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



Dying of boredom

It wasn't the most heart-warming scene, but it was intriguing nonetheless. On a warm summer afternoon several years ago, my younger brother and I were sitting on my porch with a drink. As we talked, made farting sounds with our armpits, and giggled at the fact that two grown men were giggling at armpit farting sounds, a spectacle of nature was unfolding before us. My landlords' two "Portuguese water dogs" were walking in line around the backyard. The lead dog was (as the squeamish like to call it) going "Number 2." The other dog was eating his companion's Number 2's as quickly as they dropped. After our initial revulsion and a series of snickering jokes about various toilet-related issues, my brother remarked, "I hear dogs do that sometimes when they're bored." I replied that normally I rent a video when I'm bored.

It would be interesting to do an analysis of two bored guys watching two bored dogs act out their boredom. But I want to look at a different connection. I wonder how I ended up trying to relieve my boredom by watching two disgusting Portuguese water dogs. I wonder how boredom can happen when there's so much to do and so little time. It's not a mystery that people are bored. The mystery is why. There are lots of theories about the role of the media, technology, our insulation from others, etc. The general feeling is that boredom comes from the outside; it happens to people.

My feeling is that people bore themselves. I can't count how many people I know in my age group who complain because they've cornered themselves into a lifestyle that bores them. It may have come from trying to live out a formula they've watched other people use (in many cases, family members). Or they've arranged their life into a series of hoops to jump through in the hopes of actually reaching some future happiness. Take for example a student I know who is studying technical writing because "Mom and Dad think I would make a great insurance underwriter."

Bored with sports

I'm bored with sports more quickly than ever before. I used to be able to follow a number of different teams in different sports and stay interested all the way along. I don't think my life is any busier than it was 10 years ago. But hockey, football, baseball, basketball, tennis, and other sports I enjoy are starting to blend into one another. The thing is, I participate a lot less in sports than I used to. I've become more of a spectator than a participant. And maybe this is at the root of the problem. On an individual level, some allow themselves to become spectators of life instead of participants. In the end, it's easier to watch sports than to engage in them. (Likewise, it's easier to watch someone else suffer on "Survivor" than it is to take risks in our own lives).

And being a spectator requires ever-changing spectacles to see. Right now, the Canucks occupy my time. After they win the Stanley Cup in June, I'm afraid that I'll struggle with sports boredom again.

It's simplistic to suggest that the problem is entirely spiritual. Certainly, the lack of a meaningful relationship with God creates a large vacuum that needs constant filling. This is nothing new, and it's something many of us will always struggle with. Another important dimension of this, though, is that we allow a sedentary way of life to creep in and keep us from doing things we once enjoyed. All watch and no play makes Timmy a dull boy.



Tim Antonides is a teacher and sports coach currently studying in Chicago, Illinois.

Agency bridges gap between faith groups and the media

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Faith groups and the media do not always mix well. But Faith and the Media is an organization that is working to bridge the gap by helping faith groups and journalists understand each other better and be more sensitive to each other.

Faith and the Media was formed in Winnipeg in 1996 in order to work with the media and faith groups to improve coverage of faith in Canada. In 1998 the group organized Canada's first national conference on the issue; the conference, which was sponsored by 35 faith groups and media organizations, brought together 270 journalists (including *Christian Courier's* Bert Witvoet and Alan Doerksen) and representatives at Carleton University School of Journalism in Ottawa.

The vision

Among the recommendations of that conference was the establishment of a permanent centre to address the issue of how the media covers faith, and to help religious groups be better prepared to work with the media, reports the agency on its web site (www.faithandmedia.org). The creation of such a centre is in the planning stages in Calgary, under the guidance of *Christian Courier* regional reporter and former *Calgary Herald* Religion Editor Gordon Legge (the executive director of the Centre for Faith and the Media), and with the support of a variety of academic groups in Calgary and elsewhere. The vision of the centre is to:

- Host a web site that provides a variety of resources to the news media about religion and spirituality, and to religious groups about ways to tell their stories to the media;
- Provide training to journalists and journalism students about Canada's faith groups, and how to cover them. Training would also be available to religious groups to help them work with the media;
- Organize national conferences and community forums on faith and the media in communities across Canada;
- Organize a lecture series on faith and the media;
- Help other Canadian communities create their own interfaith groups to work together on the issue of faith coverage by the media;
- Be available to speak to religious groups and conference on the issue of faith and the media;
- Be a resource to the media across the country when they need to find information about a faith group for a story;
- Create a forum where faith

groups can dialogue about commonalities and areas of conflict and tension;

- Do surveys of various media to see how they cover faith.

Explaining Islam

One valuable resource the agency has already placed on its web site is a Journalist's Guide to Islam. The guide is a ready reference that contains key background information about Islam, practical tips for reporting on Islam, a list of Muslim media contacts across Canada, and a glossary of important Muslim terms.

"Despite the fact that Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in North America, few journalists understand it," writes Legge in the guide's introduction. "Even fewer know where to go on deadline to obtain accurate and balanced information about one of the world's major faiths."

"For the uninformed, it is sometimes difficult to separate religious belief from the influence of politics and culture. There is

considerable confusion as to who speaks for Islam. In fact, too much information about Islam is passed along as fact. Too often harmful stereotypes that breed intolerance are being reinforced. This guide is intended to clear up some of the confusion and make it easier for journalists to prepare informed stories."

John Longhurst, who helped organize the 1998 Faith and the Media conference, is on the organization's board. "I continue to have an ongoing passion and interest in this," says Longhurst, who also works with the Mennonite Economic Development Agency (MEDA). The events of Sept. 11, 2001, "underscored the need for media to have a better knowledge of religion."

About the end of April, the organization plans to launch a new web site, and a second national conference is in the planning stages. The Centre for Faith and the Media "has received generous funding for three years from Heritage Canada," Longhurst reports.

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Church

Against all odds: faith flourishes quietly in North Korea

Janet Chismar

"North Korea used to be a Christian country before the Communists took over in 1945," according to Yoon Kwon Chae, whose father was one of the first Christian ministers in Korea. Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, was once called the "Jerusalem of Asia."

But now, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the government in North Korea suppresses all independent religious activity. People who engage in public religious expression or other unauthorized religious activities continue to be arrested and imprisoned.

During the Korean War, reports Christian Solidarity International (CSI), over 300,000 Christians fled to South Korea. The others disappeared in camps. North Korea had, for decades, no officially recognized religious life.

In 1998, the government permitted the existence of three Christian churches in Pyongyang, if only for propaganda purposes. According to "official" statistics, there are approximately 10,000 Protestants, 4,000 Catholics and 10,000 Buddhists in North Korea.

It is clear, according to CSI, that the three churches mentioned only serve propaganda purposes. When, for example, visitors dropped by one Easter, they found the churches closed.

Christians pay great price

Christians pay a great price in everyday life. According to the U.S. State Department, North Korean officials have stratified society on the basis of family background and "perceived loyalty to the regime" into 51 specific categories. Religious adherents are by definition relegated to a lower category, receiving fewer privileges and opportunities (such as education and employment) than others. Persons in lower categories have reportedly been denied food aid.

Worse yet, reports USCIRF, people engaging in religious proselytizing or other "unauthorized activities," such as carrying Bibles in public or distributing religious literature, are arrested and imprisoned.

While the practice of imprisoning religious believers is apparently widespread, the U.S. State Department has been unable to fully document the number of religious detainees or prisoners. According to a press report, an estimated 6,000 Christians are incarcerated in "Prison No. 15" located in the northern part of the country. In April 1999, eyewitnesses testified before Congress that prisoners held on the

basis of their religious beliefs were treated worse than other inmates.

Christians abused, killed

International Christian Concern (ICC) has also received reports of the abuse of Christian prisoners in North Korea. One woman reported seeing Christians killed when molten steel was poured on them. She also stated that Christian prisoners were often not given clothes and were treated like animals.

According to ICC, an estimated 400 Christians were executed during 1999 alone. Most of them were killed by public firing squads after being convicted on trumped up criminal charges.

In 2000, ICC reported, Younghee Lee was executed by firing squad in the market place of Moonsan, in Hamkyung North Province. She was accused of being a traitor to the Labor Party. Younghee had received the Lord after escaping to China in 1998 and returned to North Korea to preach the Gospel.

Faith across borders

Many North Koreans become Christians after fleeing to China, thanks to a number of missionaries and Christian groups operating near the border. The new believers later sneak back into Korea to preach the Gospel to their family and friends, according to a number of local



North Korean Christians meet for prayer

COURTESY VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

sources. The punishment for this "crime" is prison and in some cases, even death.

ICC learned that the government issued an open warning to its citizens that these Christian missionaries must be "ferreted out" as the "tools of imperialism." It claimed that certain underground guerillas have been posing as missionaries.

A control issue

As a Seoul-based North Korea watcher told Compass Direct, "It is really a control issue. The regime still expects total loyalty, and when people believe in God behind (the government's) back, it is regarded as the deepest form of disloyalty."

Compass confirms that a number of Christians have fled to China and

would claim asylum on grounds of religious persecution, "but Chinese government officials rarely allow the refugees to appeal to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, despite a legal obligation to do so. Most are forcibly returned to North Korea."

A spokesperson for Open Doors with Brother Andrew told Crosswalk.com that the North Korean government has targeted "religious people" for extermination for three successive generations.

"Under this pressure type of pressure," said the Open Doors representative, "people are obviously not open about their faith. It is therefore very hard to know exactly how many North Korean Christians there are."

Many sources have told Open

Doors that an underground Church does flourish in the northern areas but that it is strictly organized around family lines. ICC reports their sources estimate as many as 500,000 Christians live in North Korea.

Growth despite repression

Perhaps the reason for such growth lies in repression, as this report from CSI seems to indicate: "Having grown up in the merciless society of North Korea, many refugees feel drawn to the Christian message of love and empathy, previously entirely unknown to them. One refugee described his experience of the public execution of an entire family - 'They were tied to poles on the market square and shot to death. The children cried. I was so devastated that I fled to China and converted to Christianity.'"

"What will happen to the North Korean Christians?" asks Yoon Kwon Chae, the minister's son, who himself is a missionary. "No one knows. However, these Christians will keep on meeting and will be increasing in number. Even from North Korean governmental reports, an increase of about 50 every year is apparent. The communistic government may be able to destroy freedom; they may be able to destroy democracy; but God they cannot destroy."

In China, some religious tolerance expands with economy

Richard Read

SHANGHAI, China (RNS) — The Christian minister gathers his flock on chrome-and-vinyl chairs in a rented conference room near the semiconductor plant where many of them work.

Like most of the congregation, the minister is Chinese, and old enough to remember when communist authorities routinely jailed people, or worse, for what he does every Sunday. He takes his place behind a light-blue pedestal hand-painted with a thin red cross. A woman strikes a chord on a keyboard.

"All people that on Earth do dwell," sings the congregation, most in Chinese and some in English. "Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice."

Company helps Christians

Among the worshipers is Richard Chang, president and chief executive of Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. Chang sees his company as a means to strengthen

Christianity in China. Having built a school, company housing and a recreation centre, he plans to build a church for his workers and community members.

Chinese officials, eager for the company's multibillion-dollar investment and technology, allow the religious activity as long as the minister doesn't attract a crowd out front.

The unorthodox arrangement shows that Chinese leaders are so eager to attract the high-tech industry they are willing to risk changes they've long resisted. Beijing leaders gamble that rapid economic growth enabled by foreign investment will strengthen political stability. U.S. advocates of engagement with China bet that economic openness will foment political and social change.

Beijing, which has banned the Falun Gong spiritual sect for allegedly threatening national security, allows local governments to authorize state-approved churches under strict conditions. The U.S.

State Department continues to place China high on its list of nations that repress religious activity in ways that include harassing, detaining and sometimes torturing leaders of unauthorized groups.

Making sacrifices

At SMIC, some Western employees speak in spiritual terms about their decision to move to China and to make sacrifices.

Six dozen people crowded into the temporary church on a recent Sunday, listening to the minister explain Ecclesiastes 3, "A Time for Everything." Worshipers at the nondenominational church ranged from young adults to a stooped, elderly couple. After everyone recited the Lord's Prayer, a man rose from the front row.

"It's time for us to greet the newcomers," he says. Two dozen worshipers stood up, introduced themselves in turn and signed in on a sheet of paper. The congregation clapped enthusiastically.

After the service, Chang invited visitors to a conference room back at the plant.

"We come here as engineers to help build this industry in China," Chang says, "and the Chinese government supported us to have Sunday service as we share God's love through our work."

Chang spoke at length about his life and his dreams, describing his parents' flight from Nanjing to Taiwan in 1948, when he was an infant. He recalled his initial master's degree studies at Oregon State University. He described his workers as pioneers and said God controlled the timing of his company's growth.

After saying goodbye to his visitors, Chang walked across a dark, empty lobby toward weekend work waiting in his corner office. He turned with a smile and waved.

"Pray for us," he said.

Church

On codes and coincidences

"Though the waters thereof roare, and be troubled, though the mountaines shake with the swelling thereof. Selah." (Ps 46:3, King James Version)

"He maketh warres to cease vnto the end of the earth: hee breaketh the bow, and cutteth the speare in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire." (Ps 46:9, King James Version)

I have cited these two verses from Psalm 46 in the King James Version, retaining the original spelling and punctuation. It is useful to remind ourselves from time to time that the "King James Version" which we can buy in bookstores today, and which is still widely used, is in fact quite different from the original KJV published in 1611. Not only are the spelling and punctuation modernized (and the Apocrypha left out), but the text has also been revised in quite a few places. The text most widely used today is the revision of the KJV prepared by Dr. Benjamin Blayney in the 18th century. For a web site listing some of the most significant textual differences between the original King James Version as published in 1611 and as revised by Dr. Blayney, see http://home.earthlink.net/~theomann/new_page_6.htm.

What is curious about Psalm 46 in the King James Version is that it displays a strange numerical coincidence involving the number 46 and Shakespeare. If we begin with verse 1 and count down to the forty-sixth word, we come to the word "shake" in verse 3. If we begin with the end of the psalm in verse 11 (disregarding the word "Selah," which is a musical notation) and count backwards to the forty-sixth word, we come to the word "speare" in verse 9. Thus in the forty-sixth psalm the 46th word from the beginning and the 46th word from the end together spell the name "Shakespeare." But that is not all. The King James Version was published in the year 1611, when Shakespeare was 46 years old!

An amazing coincidence

This is certainly an amazing coincidence. To me it is almost equally amazing that some diligent Bible student (I don't know who it was) actually discovered this coincidence. Who in his right mind (let's assume it was a man) would spend his time counting words in this way? It seems like an entirely wrongheaded way of studying the Scriptures. Nevertheless, it clearly

Chapter & Verse

Al Wolters



is a most amazing circumstance which he discovered. Should we ascribe any significance to this biblical connection between Psalm 46 and Shakespeare?

I think not. In my opinion, this is simply a coincidence, a statistical fluke which has nothing to do with God's revelation to us. To see in this coincidence some kind of code by which God is telling us something about Shakespeare is to fundamentally misunderstand the Scriptures. For one thing, it would ascribe some kind of special divine guidance to the team of translators working on King James's Bible in Shakespeare's day. For another, it would treat this particular English translation as having a revelatory status above and beyond the original text in Hebrew and Greek, although it is clearly the latter which has the primary authority as God's word.

No numerological 'Bible Code'

It is useful to be reminded of statistical flukes of this kind, because they highlight the futility of discovering a "Bible code" in the text of the Bible, even in the original languages. It is possible to do computer searches which string together every fifth word (for example) of the traditional Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and come up with sentences which look like amazing predictions or Messianic messages. The trouble with this kind of analysis is that equally amazing sentences can be conjured up by submitting any extensive text (say Melville's *Moby Dick*) to a similar procedure. With a bit of ingenuity it is probably possible to discover a "Satanic" code in the Scriptures as well. Such numerological manipulations of the biblical text are arbitrary and misleading.

We are better off to stick to the plain meaning of the text. The plain meaning of Psalm 46, as stated in the summary printed above it in the King James Version, is about "the confidence which the Church hath in God." A child can understand that.



Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. He is a great admirer of the King James Version, which reflects the best of godly biblical scholarship available in its day.

Human rights activists face long prison sentences in Cuba



CENTER FOR A FREE CUBA

Elsa Morejon holds up a photo of her husband, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet.

HAVANA, Cuba (EP) — A prominent Cuban human rights activist could face 25 years in prison as part of a massive crackdown by the government on pro-democracy and human rights activists.

Nearly 80 men and women were arrested in Cuba in the last two weeks of March as part of a government crackdown on dissidents. Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet was arrested on Dec. 6, 2002, before the latest round of arrests, but he faces the same long prison sentence that many of the dissidents have already received.

Biscet was arrested and charged with "disorderly conduct" when Cuban security forces attempted to forcibly prevent him and other human rights activists from entering a home where a meeting of Friends of Human Rights, a grassroots human rights project, was to take place. According to Reuters, Cuba's communist government announced that 75 of the arrested dissidents were given prison sentences between six to 28 years. The trials were assembled and completed within a day, sources reported, and only three days were allowed to attempt appeals. Foreign diplomats and journalists were not allowed to attend the trials.

Biscet a devout Christian

Communist officials claimed that those arrested were paid by the U.S. to publicly oppose the government and create a "fifth column" attack that would cause trouble on the island. "What has been presented as the emergence of internal opposition is no more than an attempt at opposition made in the U.S.A.," Felipe Perez Roque, Cuba's foreign minister, told Reuters. Roque further accused the Bush administration of helping to organize and fund opposition groups in Cuba in an attempt to overthrow the communist government of dictator Fidel Castro.

Biscet, 41, is a devout Christian and founder of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights, which promotes the defense of all human rights through non-violent means. He has modeled his own work and that of the organization on the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr.

Accused of 'dangerousness'

Biscet has a nine-year history of agitation against Cuba's communist government. In 1994, Biscet was officially accused of 'dangerousness' by the Cuban government and thereafter became a target of state security forces.

Biscet was released from prison Oct. 31, 2002 after he served a three-year sentence for hanging the Cuban flag upside down in protest at the lack of freedom in the country. His most recent trial comes at the end of a massive crackdown on human rights and pro-democracy activists across the island. Some men and women, many of them active Christians, have already been sentenced to between 20 and 27 years in prison, reported Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), a religious rights organization.

While he was in prison, authorities confiscated Biscet's Bible numerous times as a form of punishment and have consistently denied him any pastoral visits. He has also been denied family visits, access to the prison library, and medical treatment, which led him to lose all of his molars after chronic problems with his gums. Mervyn Thomas, CSW's chief executive, said, "Dr. Biscet is one of dozens of human rights activists that have been appallingly treated by the Cuban government. The international community should not stand aside and watch this happen, but pressure the Cuban government to reconsider its treatment of human rights activists."

Church of Scotland hymns to become more Scottish

Cedric Pulford

LONDON, England (ENI) — The Church of Scotland is planning to cull more than a third of its hymnbook, making room for more Scottish words and music.

"Previously, too many of our hymns have been borrowed," said Douglas Galbraith, coordinator of the Kirk's worship and doctrine office and a member of the committee that prepared this fourth edition of the Church Hymnary. "The new book has vastly more material from the folk and traditional strands of Scottish culture, both lowland and Gaelic."

The list of 250 hymns to be dropped, most of which are rarely used, includes the well-known song "Jerusalem," with words by William Blake, and the verse "Till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land." The music to which "Jerusalem" is traditionally sung, however, has survived to accompany a psalm.

Traditional Scottish tunes like the Skye Boat Song, Ye Banks and Braes and the Eriskay Love Lilt will accompany words by modern Scottish writers as well as by Robert Burns, Scotland's national poet.

The committee preparing the

Church Hymnary stressed that the new edition, the first in 30 years, would keep much familiar material from the 16th to 19th centuries, but would also take account of "the amazing outpouring of creativity in worship texts and music worldwide since the 1960s."

Recent material from Asia and Africa is included, as well as children's songs published in Australia and in Canada.

The hymnary borrows from the Anglican tradition with short sung responses suitable for interspersing in services.

Humor

The mystery of the missing sock

Harry der Nederlanden

Everybody knows that there's something mysterious about socks — the way they vanish only to appear again in another place. They seem to live in a parallel universe alongside ours. There's nothing spiritual or supernatural about that universe, but it does have some characteristics of the world of ghosts and poltergeists depicted in so many grade B movies. I suspect it also has its own odor.

We now have three cardboard boxes brimful of single socks that we've been saving for several decades. Most people throw single socks out after only a few weeks, but we've discovered that the mates of single socks will appear miraculously weeks, months, sometimes even years later. Every few months we lay out our collection of single socks according to color. It covers the entire living room floor and most of the dining room as well. Sorted according to color, it looks like a huge map of the world. When you spot two matching socks in this vast landscape, it's like witnessing the reunion of sisters after years of separation.

Conspiracy theories

Socks will vanish and reappear at will, it seems. Some folk inclined toward conspiracy theories think there is collusion between the manufacturers of washing machines and sock makers. Washing machines, they say, are designed to eat socks. They swear that even if they carefully organize and count clothes before dumping them into the machine, when they take them out, there are socks missing. With my own eyes I've seen people diving headfirst into washing machines, their voices echoing from inside as they called for their lost sheep.

I've also seen the harried housewife, her hair disheveled, her face red and puffy after searching the laundry room and then the entire house for the seventh time, throw up her hands and declare, "The washing machine ate it! I swear!" And you can tell from the way she says it, that she imagines the machine has



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

developed a malignant spirit and a perverse appetite for socks. She believes that contraption in the basement or laundry room has morphed into an evil cyborg whose one way of tormenting mobile beings like ourselves is to chew up their socks.

Chuckling maliciously

Can't you just hear that washing machine chuckling maliciously in the basement as you're digging through the laundry basket for the umpteenth time in the morning looking for the mate to your sock? Condemned to just sit there connected to the wall by a couple of hoses, it obviously targets the feet.

That, I say, is some of the thinking behind the claim that washing machines devour socks. But I don't buy it for a moment. I've looked into the conspiracy theory and the cyborg theory and have concluded that they don't pass worldview analysis.

First, a practical critique of the conspiracy theory. How on earth would you design the machine to

chew up only one sock? And why? I've raised this question with hardened conspiracy theory advocates and they just roll their eyes. "Of course the machine sometimes devours both socks, dimwit!" they reply. [They don't always come right out and say "dimwit" but it's always implied.] "You only notice a sock is missing if one of them is left behind."

I italicized those last words because I heard them said that way so often — with emphasis. After doing some research on the Internet, I've confirmed my suspicion that there's a certain neoconservative and premillennial ideology behind this theory. There are even ties to the White House. And you-know-who lives there.

According to reliable sources who did not, however, wish to be named, the entire Left Behind series of books was inspired by the disappearance of single socks. The one left behind is actually not the essential one in the scene. It is nothing in and of itself. It is nothing more than a reminder and symbol of the one that has been taken. That's why there's this sense of frustration and grief whenever you hold up that one lonely sock. All you can think of is the one that is not there.

This is anathema

From a Reformed point of view, this is anathema. It has, according to the creation-order theologian Dr. Al Wolters, roots in neoplatonism. Instead of affirming the world that is here — the world we can touch and get our feet into — we focus on another world that is not here, dreaming of what might be or might have been, that is, a world in which

left and right, male and female always come in completed pairs. In this way, the desire for wholeness can sicken our entire relationship with the world that is here, a world comprised of singles as well as pairs.

The idea that machines are animated by evil designs upon moral human beings, according to the Society of Reformational Sophists, stems from a worldview that believes all technology enslaves us so we serve it rather than one another. "It is the devil, not the machine, that is out to bruise your heel," said Rev. Kouwenpoten.

Some time ago, I posed the problem to a theologian with the World Council of Churches, who referred it to the Faith and Order Commission which passed it to a sub-committee which subsequently met in Stockholm, Sweden and then again in Italy, where it conferred with psychics.

A Dutch WCC theologian insisted that the collusion was not between washing machine manufacturers and sock-makers but between the latter and *klompen-makers*. A German theologian denied that his socks ever went missing: "It is all a matter of discipline and will," he said. "And labeling your socks."

'Simplify!'

The Vatican, catching a whiff of a new issue on the wind, went directly to the heart of the matter, namely, the complexity of modern life. "Simplify!" said Archbishop Frater Poderodius. "Wash your socks in the sink one pair at a time." Poderodius is the head of a Catholic order that seeks to help Christians lead a more simple life.

The final statement of the Committee to Study the Sociopolitical and Theological Significance of the Left Behind Phenomenon, however, charged that behind the question lurked a middle class obsession with bourgeois order. "Why are we so fixated on finding the matching sock?" asked Prof. R. Colorblind. "Is it because we just want to deny the broken, conflicted nature of reality and the divisions among classes and races and sexes?"

At his instigation, the committee issued a statement calling on Christians from the Northern Hemisphere to send one of each pair of their socks to some poor country in the Southern Hemisphere. "Wearing mismatched socks," he suggested, "will become a sign of our liberation from middle class obsessions and a celebration of difference." He proudly displayed the socks he was wearing — one white and one black.

A theologian from the Congo, asked whether his parishioners would appreciate getting single

socks, said that when he was a child his favorite plaything was a woolen sock. He'd stick his hand in it at bedtime and it would tell him his favorite Bible stories.

As always, the WCC became so focused on the practical and political implications that it lost sight of the metaphysical questions underlying the issue. Their proposal does nothing to address the mystery of how and why socks vanish only to reappear weeks and sometimes months later. Lost under the bed or in someone else's drawer, you say? That's because we in the West are so influenced by common-sense realism that we no longer see the mysteries in everyday life.

Socks trying to tell us something

Building on the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd, which splits life up into different kinds of time using prisms, Rev. Kouwenpoten suggested that the disappearance of single socks is almost certainly one of the most telling symptoms of our age. "One of the spiritual ailments of our era," he proposed, "is that we all go through life limping on two different pinions. In Old Testament times, the people had a prophet like Elijah to tell them to pull up their socks. Today, it may just be that our socks themselves are trying to tell us something."

Synchronicity, he said, is when all the different time-spheres are all working in harmony. "But when we go limping about on two different pinions, this puts the times out of joint. Everything becomes desynchronized. One sock may be in one time zone and the other sock in another time zone."

As many of us Kuyperians have always suspected, the solution to the mystery of the missing sock is to be found in the unity of the heart. "The knight of faith never spends his time looking high and low for the vanishing sock and his socks are never mismatched," said Kouwenpoten.

When asked about the WCC proposal, he wrinkled his nose and sniffed: "It smells like syncretism to me."

I have always found it ominous that many pastors in the CRC have been spotted out in the congregation with mismatching socks. When I had catechism with Rev. Louis Tamminga, I'm almost certain that on several occasions his socks didn't match. As a result, I've begun to reassess everything I learned in his classes.

And just this past Sunday, when my wife and I were visiting with the former editor of this paper, we noticed that his socks did not quite match either . . . and neither one was white.

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Senior Care

Easing the transition to long-term care

Lisa M. Petsche

The time has come. You've had to do the unthinkable: place a loved one on the waiting list for a long-term care facility (also known as a nursing home).

Many people don't understand that this is an agonizing decision. A damaging myth still prevails that families "dump" frail older members in nursing homes to free themselves of the inconvenience of caregiving and get on with their lives.

Quite the opposite is true. If you're like most caregivers, you probably didn't consider placement for your loved one until urged to do so by friends or a health care professional. It's typically a last resort, pursued only after burnout or some other crisis has occurred.

Anxiety and anger

Painfully, your relative is likely to express anxiety and anger about institutionalization, feeling frightened and abandoned. This is accompanied by a tremendous sense of loss. She or he (the latter will be used from here on) will need time to grieve and adjust – as will you. Following are some ways to help with the transition:

- Plan to spend admission day together. There are many things you will need to do, such as unpack belongings, meet with the nurse about care planning, sign forms and visit the business office. Various staff may come by to introduce themselves and explain their role.

- Bring some special belongings on the first day – for example, a favorite blanket or framed print.

- Ask what kind of toiletries and other personal items need to be supplied, and what type and amount of clothing is recommended.

- Inquire about the activities schedule as well as onsite worship services.

- Find out if there are private spaces for visiting.

- Share as much as possible about your loved one's routines, likes and dislikes. Also provide the following information which staff can use to engage him in conversation and build rapport: birthplace, past vocation and leisure interests, significant life events and important people in their social network. Bring in photos from the past, and pictures of favorite people and places.

- Notify relatives and friends of the facility's address and phone number and encourage them to call, write or visit. Offer to join them for the first visit if they express anxiety.

- Visit often, especially in the early days, to provide support and reassurance. If you start out coming daily, gradually cut back to a more manageable schedule as your loved one settles in and you feel assured that he is okay. (Just because you're



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

not providing 24-hour assistance doesn't mean you're immune to caregiver burnout.) Develop a regular pattern so he knows when to expect you and can anticipate your next visit. Alternate days with other relatives; you can always telephone in between.

- Be prepared that your loved one may have many complaints initially. If a concern seems legitimate, discuss it with staff and do some advocacy if necessary. Otherwise, provide a listening ear, allowing him to vent. Be attuned to underlying feelings and empathize with them.

- If he asks you to take him home, gently but firmly reinforce that it's no longer an option. Reassure him you'll be returning soon, and plan what you'll do together. If it's feasible and you intend to follow through, remind him that he can come home for a visit. Don't make false promises.

- If your loved one gets upset when you're ready to leave, ask nursing staff to provide a distraction. Try to time visits so you can depart when he's beginning a meal, heading off to an activity or going to bed.

Partnership of trust

- Get to know the staff, in order to develop a partnership of trust and mutual sharing. Show your appreciation if you're pleased with their care. When you have a concern, express it calmly, ask for their perspective and let them know what you would like to see happen.

Get to know other residents and family members, either informally or through participation in facility activities. Attend the next family

council meeting.

- Re-create routines from home, such as playing cards or watching a favorite TV program together.

- Bring in special foods – a home-cooked meal or favorite take-out treat.

- Plan activities outside of the institution. Go for a walk around the neighborhood or to a nearby park,

or take a drive. If your loved one is wheelchair-dependent, get him registered with the local accessible transportation service. Then you can take him shopping, to cultural events, or to a function at your church if it's accessible.

- Continue to include him in family celebrations. If your home isn't accessible, choose a restaurant

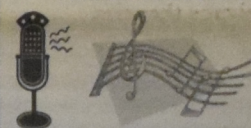
that is, or ask staff to help you plan a gathering onsite.

- Spend time with friends and relatives who support your decision. Family members of other residents as well as facility staff – especially the social worker – are also valuable sources of support. Initially you may need lots of reassurance that you have made the right decision.

- Learn to let go of – or at least manage – guilt feelings. These are natural but can be debilitating if you dwell on them. Remind yourself that your loved one is benefiting from around-the-clock professional nursing care, therapeutic programming and companionship. Just because you are no longer the hands-on caregiver does not lessen the importance of your role. With the heavy responsibility of primary caregiving lifted, you can focus your energy on meeting your loved one's emotional and spiritual needs and enjoying your time together.

Lisa M. Petsche is a freelance writer as well as a social worker specializing in geriatrics.

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Arts and Worship

Niagara conference promotes the use of all the arts in worship

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The Arts in Worship Niagara conference drew 350 Christians of various denominations, which was the number predetermined as the maximum by organizers. Some people had to be denied registration. For a first-time event, the numbers were a rousing affirmation.

Arts in Worship Niagara, which took place March 28 and 29, was an interdenominational effort hosted by Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church and made possible through a worship renewal grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with funds provided by Lily Endowment Inc.

Organizers had hoped to put before the conferees a "creative, artistic, dramatic, musical and visual feast." In this they succeeded admirably. For those Christians who believe that the spoken word in worship can be enhanced and reinforced by all the arts, including the dramatic arts, this was a time to be informed, encouraged and inspired.

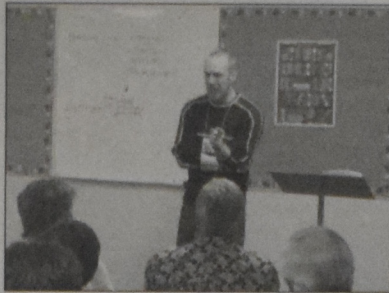
Why sing?

For this time around I myself focused on congregational singing and song writing. I attended a workshop by Debbie Lou Ludolph, a vocal teacher and performer who has been active in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in the area of worship and the arts.

Why do God's people sing? she asked the 35 workshop attendees. The answers ranged from "We have the goods given by God," "We have an innate desire to sing" to "Singing allows us to express emotions" and "We want to respond to the Lord's invitation to sing."

The next question followed logically: "Why do people hesitate to sing in church?" This time the participants came up with about 20 answers, among which were: "Young people think it's not cool to sing"; people don't like the style"; "some come to be entertained"; "people are self-conscious"; "the song is not familiar"; "they can't find the right voice."

Ludolph provided a host of worthwhile ideas to help congregations improve their singing. A church could benefit from having her come and sit through a worship service and provide feedback. She can be reached at ludolph@golden.net.



Improve your singing

The second workshop I attended was led by Laurens Kaldewey, Director of Music at Willowdale Christian Reformed Church in Toronto. Kaldewey is a freelance organist and conductor. His topic was "The Worship-Leading Choir."

Kaldewey helped us understand the difference between a praise team and a worship choir. Both can be utilized, even in tandem, to support the congregation in their praising of God. Using many hymn and praise song examples, he taught the group how to be more creative and how to incorporate different traditions. He even focused briefly on the placement of the choir.

It amazed me how both Kaldewey and Ludolph quickly had their workshop group sounding like a professional choir. It seemed that most participants could read music, which one cannot, of course, assume about the average congregation.

Kleenex songs

The afternoon sessions provided a pleasant change for me. Dr. Bert Polman, professor of music at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., spoke on "Integrating Old and New in Worship." Using a finely-honed style that included humor and imaginative yet plain language, he demonstrated a wealth of knowledge of church music and its biblical foundation. Polman did not shy away from making the odd controversial statement. One pastor confided to me afterwards that on some points he strongly agreed with Polman and on some others he strongly disagreed, but that he always learns a lot from him.

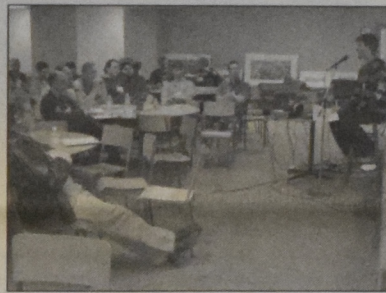
Polman addressed biblical commands

regarding praise, ecumenical awareness, confessional focus, pastoral concerns — all having to do with the idea of integrating old and new in music and worship. He favors the "convergent" model, also known as the "blended" model of worship, and he warned congregations against separating styles of worship and thereby dividing the congregation.

Polman tolerates but has little appreciation for "kleenex songs," the type of songs that contain emotion but have about the same life span as a flimsy tissue.

Christian songs

As a finale, I thoroughly enjoyed the song writing workshop given by Steve Bell, a Juno award winner in religious music. I learned things about the process of writing lyrics and music in and through the stories he provided with each song he sang.



I found Steve to be well-grounded in biblical knowledge but also authentic in how he expresses his faith. Steve does not necessarily write songs about Jesus or salvation. He clearly distanced himself from some evangelist who had said that Jesus was the only person worth writing a song about. "I pity his wife and children," was Steve's response. Steve himself does write songs about and for his family. Rather than say that he writes Christian music he believes that he writes music as a Christian.

To illustrate the difference between a song that has lasting qualities and one that does not (Bell thinks that few Christian contemporary songs have lasting value), he told how he once placed a replica of Rembrandt's "Prodigal Son" next to a realistic painting of a house in



a town square. He asked what the difference was in terms of their effect. One person finally commented that the Rembrandt painting asks questions and draws you in, whereas the other painting does not evoke any feelings or thoughts: "What you see is what you get."

More than workshops

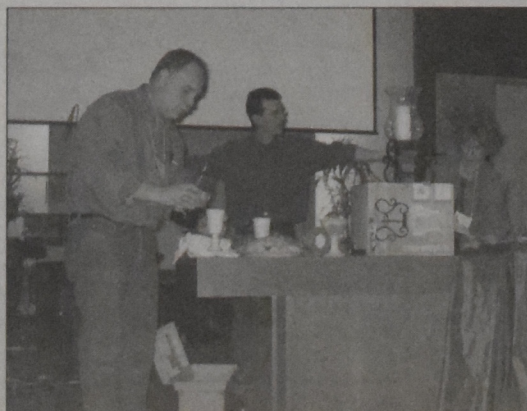
And so the four workshops I attended made me realize how important it is for Christians to reflect on how we worship God and to learn from each other. The conference was more than workshops, of course. There were opportunities to worship, using a variety of the arts, there were displays of the visual arts, there was opportunity to fellowship over a meal or a snack.

Workshop leader and artist Chris Stoffel Overvoorde of Grand Rapids, Michigan, said that he was encouraged by the fact that he was attending the second conference on the arts in worship this year. "It's time for Christians to include more than music in worship," he said.

Conferees were generally appreciative of the way the conference had been organized. Kudos to the Jubilee Fellowship food providers and servers and many other volunteers. Applause to the nine members of the organizing committee, and a special word of thanks to Ron VandenBurg, teacher at Beacon Christian Schools and member of Jubilee Fellowship CRC, whose vision gathered so many other people around the project.

People took to heart what one speaker urged them to do in the opening service, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." Since all of those in attendance at the worship services had breath, the roof almost came off the building.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RON VANDENBURG



Arts and Worship

Of guinea pigs and rabbits and the arts in worship

Jamie Vander Berg

Art is a reflection of God's creativity. The keynote speaker at the "Arts in Worship Niagara" conference (held in St. Catharines, Ont., in late March) shed light on this theme almost immediately in his opening address. There is a place for the arts in worship.

Careful to note that not all art is reflective of God's glory, Gareth Goossen went on to encourage us to make use of the arts in our worship services, redeeming the arts with which God has gifted us.

Throughout the conference, that theme met with some interference. The theme remained constant, but, like the reception of an aerial antenna, the picture was not always the clearest. I was reminded throughout of the recent *Blockbuster*™ commercial with the guinea pig adjusting the rabbit's ears. Most of the interference that I experienced revolved around the question of being relevant. Although it seems most of us agree that there's something to be said about the redemption of the arts, we don't have a clear picture of how best to use the arts to engage our culture.

Two-fold purpose

Worship, as I understand it, has a two-fold purpose. Not only is it an expression of gratitude directed to the God who created and sustains this world, it is also a means by which God speaks with his people, inviting them in and drawing them near. In the midst of all our service planning, we are faced with the task of extending that invitation in partnership with our God. Remaining relevant and engaging our culture is not something that can simply be ignored; the invitation falls flat without it.

I attended four workshops during the conference. Three of them have a long-standing history within our worship traditions: liturgy, poetry and drama. The other workshop I attended is relatively new on the worship scene: videography. Throughout these workshops, I heard a number of different responses to the question of remaining relevant.

Following church seasons

In looking at liturgy and liturgical expression, Dr. Jack Van Marion noted the importance of marking time. Liturgies that follow the church seasons mark the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ, from the advent of his birth to the celebration of Easter and the movement of the Spirit at Pentecost. A liturgy that pays attention to the church seasons proclaims the full gospel, giving everyone a sense not only of Christmas and Easter celebration, but also of advent anticipation and lenten confession.

In a world of constant upheaval and faceless Internet exchange, there's something to be said about giving expression to the whole range of our human experience. There is a place in worship for both praise and lament; there is a place for deepened community, not just personal faith. The church seasons are a means by which to remain both relevant and consistent, countering our culture's whimsical waves.

In the workshop led by John Terpstra, entitled "Poetry and Music in Worship," I heard the word "authentic" whispered by the woman sitting beside me. Although not mentioned specifically, the notion of

authenticity was an integral part of the workshop. Poetry gives expression to our everyday adventures – the good, the bad and the ugly. The words and the rhythms are a reflection of our most normal experiences, from the baptism of children to the realities of war. Weaving poetry into our worship services is a way to give authentic expression to our relationship with each other and with God; it's a way to remain relevant in a world of Hollywood make-overs and political propagandists.

The remaining two workshops that I attended were attempts to develop specific artistic and technical skills. They were worthwhile workshops, but they didn't deal specifically with the question of remaining relevant. There was, however, something significant said between the lines that struck me. It was noted that, in order to remain relevant, we have to keep up with the technological rat race that swirls and eddies around us. My eyebrows were raised. Noted by videographer, Mike Enns, was the importance of remaining in step with an increasingly visual culture. The same sentiment was expressed by dramatist, Nicole Lee. In a world bombarded by flashing images and edited video clips, our worship services need to reflect the changes that are taking place around us. The message must remain; the medium must change.

The "Arts in Worship Niagara" conference was a blessing in that it

raised what is perhaps the most pressing question for the church today – the question of remaining relevant in a postmodern, post-Christian age. The conference was, for me, a forum of responses, few of which were the same. There were those who spoke of consistency and giving expression to the whole range of human experience; there were those who spoke of remaining authentic, blatantly honest; there were those who spoke of remaining in step with the changes around us.

And in the end, I'm left with a number of subsequent questions: Is keeping up with technology something we should engage in simply to remain in step with the world around us? Is it possible to be authentic in the telling of our story without being exclusive, either as individuals or as communities of faith? And at what point do the church seasons themselves become too neat a package, too prescriptive, for a culture that resists programmed responses, neatly concluded sitcoms and music that is without dissonance?

There is a tension that must remain – a tension between change and tradition, between authenticity and inclusivity, between the marking of time and the open-ended working of the Spirit. There's something deeply human about having to adjust each other's rabbit ears.

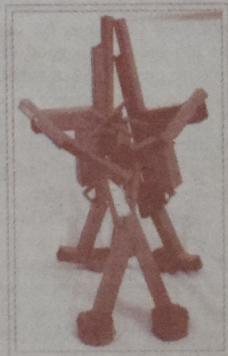
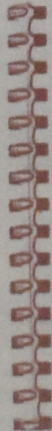
So much of this has been for God's sake

So much of this has been for God's sake.

Dogmatically dogmatic to the point of death and destruction for God's sake.

"I love your red machine gun. Does it really work? Is it pointed at someone important? Here, nail me to the barrel. Oh, and your neighbour has one too, but it's pointed towards you. Just the same, ask your neighbour to drive a spike through my other wrist and embed it in the weapon. Yes, just like that. Everybody happy now?"

It's not simple, it's stupid. It's complex and really stupid.



"For God's Sake" – painted steel and concrete – 22 cm

own mixed contribution to the sorrow in the world. One example is shown here, a steel and concrete construction entitled "For God's Sake."

Opheim's artwork could serve as an invitation to go see Kaethe Kollwitz, *The Art of Compassion*, showing now at the Art Gallery of Ontario, until 25 May, 2003. Kollwitz' prints, drawing and sculpture give a deeply sensitive woman's artistic cry at the horror of militaristic war. Her art was considered "decadent" by Hitler.

The AGO costs \$12 entrance, but is free on Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00 PM.

David W. Opheim serves as priest to the Anglican parish on Toronto Island. His art exhibition with poetry at St. James Cathedral Parish House this past fall, in commemoration of the event of 11 September 2001 in New York, was a truly christian artistic response. Not anger, but a troubled, self-examining reflection on our

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Christian Living

Why go to church? 19

To be built up in our piety

A. A. vanRuler

When we speak of "building up," we think of creating something, founding or erecting something permanent like a house or building. In the New Testament the mechanical imagery of building mingles with the more organic imagery of the body.

We think of the congregation, on the one hand, as a building – the temple of the Holy Spirit – and, on the other, as a body – the body of Christ. It is a community that must be established and then maintained. This is another reason we go to church – to be gathered and formed into a unified whole.

This goes deeper than Christians simply forming relationships with one another. It also means being grafted into the body of Christ and being built up in him. In him we find everything. He himself is all in all. He is our righteousness, holiness, wisdom and redemption. We must be cemented into him as living stones.

Benefits and blessings

To put it another way, there are the gifts and treasures, the benefits and blessings of God's grace. To realize the riches that we have in him, we must gradually participate in them. This process is part of being built up in him.

Beyond this there are also the charismata, the special gifts, both spiritual and natural. One person receives one kind of gift, another a different one. Some get nothing special beyond life and faith. We do not receive these gifts for ourselves but to build up the whole. We must make them available to the entire community willingly and gladly to serve others. We go to church to build an institution and to be built up as part of it.

This is how that miraculous communion of faith, hope and love comes into being. It is a communion that penetrates to the very roots of life. We cannot be bound together more deeply and intimately than in this experience and confession of salvation in one Lord. Belonging to this communion gives the individual an immense sense of security, and it is therefore a source of great joy.

This communion is built up centrally in the worship services and is then extended in ever larger circles. Some people nowadays try to do without a worship service in the traditional sense, but this seems to me to be a dead end. When the liturgical centre is removed, eventually fellowship collapses into a shapeless mass.

We must remember, too, that this communion-in-the-roots of our existence is the origin and model of all other forms of community in the

world. This is why it is so important that it be a permanent building.

We must not, however, stop at the level of community. This is but a moment in the building up of the congregation; it must also include the building up of the faith, that is, the faith of the individual believer. Every person who comes to church sits there all alone in the middle of the congregation in his heart. Much depends upon what happens to that solitary self. Does he leave in the same condition he came? Or is he built up in his faith?

Vast treasures

Every one of us must be led into the riches of the Scriptures and tradition. These contain treasures so vast in number and scope, in beauty and wisdom that we can study them forever.

They must become our foundation. The heart is an inconstant thing; it is never capable of perfect trust. No wonder: it's hard to believe that the world and life have been redeemed and that they are good and beautiful in themselves. Who can really grasp this? It is too wonderful and the heart is tainted with distrust. This is why the weekly worship service is indispensable.

But Christians are not just served a dry crust that we must chew on forever. We are served a rich feast with numerous courses and a huge variety of dishes. There's no end to them. If you tried to consume them all in one sitting, you'd get indigestion. We have to keep coming back.

We don't just learn about the forgiveness of sins or about Jesus as our example, but we learn hundreds of things as we stroll through the many rooms of this infinite palace.

Being grounded and enriched in this way are the two most important parts of building up the individual in the faith. I am built up in the faith, not first of all in my faith. I go to church with my own faith so that in one way or another it will be built up. This doesn't sound Christian, does it – that it is first of all about the faith?

Nevertheless, it is about the faith that God revealed to Israel and in Christ. It is the faith that has been passed on by the Apostles in the Scriptures. This is the tradition: it is the faith of the church, not just of the clergy but of the church as a community in all places and from all times.

That's how it comes to me and continues to come to me. I can allow myself to be taken up into it and engrafted into it. In this way, I set my foundations in the faith and am built up in it. I begin to participate in it and accept it as my own.



Family Devotions at the breakfast table

Gradually it more or less becomes my own faith.

We're talking here about the transition from the objective to the subjective, from the faith to this same faith as my faith. This is important. We cannot stop at the community as such, not even at being a member of that community. We must also come to terms with it on our own, as we are in and of ourselves. There is also the uniqueness, selfhood and solitariness of the individual, which is never dissolved. Ultimately, it is I myself who must have faith and take God's business as mine. Christianity can demand nothing less of me.

Anyone who wishes to experience this transition from the objective to the subjective finds himself penetrating ever deeper into the subjective. He doesn't stop at participating in the faith of the community as an individual. It becomes ever more subjective, personal and inward for him. When he begins to participate in the faith of the church for himself and out of himself, everything that happens inside him comes into the open and acquires fundamental meaning.

In other words, there is also an inner building that happens. Every person has a certain inner life: everyone has a conscience, a heart, an emotional life, feelings. They may be concealed or hidden. Some people can ignore inner emotions. Or someone's heart can be hardened or burnt. But sooner or later what is going on inside will burst to the surface, even if only as stubbornness, anger or neurosis.

However, you can also begin to pay more attention to that inner life. You can nurture it and feed it. You can become dissatisfied with your own inner emptiness and begin to search for ways to genuinely fill that hollowness. You want more than forgetfulness and diversion; you

want to be filled.

Seeking piety

When this happens, you are seeking piety. You go to church to get something for your own inner well-being, for nourishment for the soul. You are seeking foundations for your inner life.

We can distinguish four facets in this quest.

The first is the one I've already mentioned – the quest to be filled. You feel empty. Your heart is dessicated and dead. Sometimes it seems as if everything is dead. You feel that your life is impoverished, that you have nothing.

This can be changed by going to church, by faith, by the gospel, by praising God. Then suddenly you find life – life in all its fullness – flooding into you and your heart overflows.

You may not find an absolute meaning in your life. Maybe that's not even desirable, for that would be too much of a good thing. But you do get a sense of fulfilment, of content and substance in your life. You feel that to be here is worthwhile. And you take delight in simply being a child of God and being able to serve him.

This brings us to the second facet of being built up in your piety – the stylization of your inwardness. You no longer simply go with the flow inwardly, being blown hither and yon by every wind. Your inwardness gets a certain shape and direction. You become oriented toward God. You realize that you live before his face and that you may (in fact, must) serve him. Just as you obey all traffic regulations when you drive your car, so you seek to follow the directions laid out by the gospel.

Not that anyone is ever able to master this style of living completely. But continual exercise

will take us a long way. This is what it means "to exist in the truth" (Kierkegaard). Then even our moods will become attuned to the Word of God. This is the new "mode of being" (H. Kraemer) revealed to us in Christ.

But there is something even more primary than that our inner emptiness be filled and that this inner fullness develop a certain style. Along with the mystics of all times we could call this being inwardly touched. The reality of things – of truth, beauty, and goodness, of being and salvation – must penetrate to our inner being. The Holy Spirit must touch our inner being with his magic wand.

When this happens, suddenly everything changes. The scales fall from our eyes and we stare into the light. Our hard hearts are shattered and we are filled with wonder and affection. We find ourselves standing as free creatures in this vast creation.

Whenever we go to church we may be touched in our inner depths in this magical way.

This brings us to a very different facet, far beyond being filled or stylized. I'm speaking here of peace and contentment. Yes, we can come to this point. As one mystic cries out: "May I, O Lord, find all my desires fulfilled and satisfied in you?"

The emptiness of our hearts is essentially an intense desire. But this desire can be wholly satisfied. This is the ultimate in being formed. We go to church also to reach this point.

But, some will ask, why do we have to go to church for this? I would answer, Blessed are those who can find it without going to church. But is this possible?

Is there an inwardness that relates purely to itself and which can therefore save itself? Surely, all of life, even the most inward things, are mediated; they all need what is outward. Are there feelings that do not arise out of external things? Inwardness, I fear, becomes hopelessly entangled in itself and mired in confusion when, like a grape vine, it is not stretched on external supports.

Separate space for worship

This brings us to the church building. It is not just a gathering place for the congregation. It is rather the place where we meet God. He himself is present there. And not just because the trine God is present everywhere in creation. Because he has become incarnate in Jesus Christ, God is present in a wholly different way as well – in his grace, in overcoming sin and death, in the fullness of redemption and in eternal life. He is present as "the visible God" (Irenaeus).

Moreover, even if there had been no fall, no death and therefore no

Christian Living

redemption but only the good creation, wouldn't there be a separate space set aside for worship? God the Creator is, after all, distinct and unique, and wouldn't we need a special place in creation to symbolically point to that uniqueness?

In any case, the church building is the visible place where we meet with God, even though we bump into him everywhere – in the garden, in culture, and in the town hall. As creatures we need a liturgical space, and as sinners we need a church building.

Our inwardness does not come fully into itself until we meet our Creator and Redeemer. To become nothing but subjectivity is impossible, for then we would annihilate ourselves. All subjectivity keeps an element of objectivity, for we don't fully become ourselves until we meet God. We are, among other things, our relation to God.

Therefore, we are not really built up, that is, touched, filled, stylized and satisfied inwardly, until we go to church.

Do we really need this? I don't only mean going to church but piety. Nowadays almost everything is judged in terms of its social or political effect or utility. Many discussions in the media about Christianity are ruled by the question: "Jesus, tell us, what are you good for in our society?" That is barbaric, but it happens all the time.

The social and political (along with entertainment) seem to be almost the only matters taken seriously. It is, of course, as obvious as the nose on your face that Jesus does have a tremendous impact on society and politics, but this impact comes from the fullness of salvation and the Kingdom that was inaugurated by him.

Still, our concern with social and political issues, however right and necessary, must not be at the cost of our inward piety. The latter is no less real than the public sphere. What is more important – government regulations pertaining to work or the affections of the heart? Actually, we should not choose, but should insist that they are equally important.

The same thing can be said about moral issues. The gospel of Jesus Christ must shape all of life, including the thousands of relationships we enter into as individuals with our fellows and in societal relationships. So it also has moral consequences and utility.

But there is also the mysticism of the inner life; it is an essential part of life's wholeness. Piety is just as essential a structure of our humanity as love and friendship, freedom and anxiety, speaking and silence. To be a creature, to stand before the face of God, to have a relationship with him, to meet him – these all make up

part of human existence. Piety, in fact, seems to me to be the most fundamental part of human existence. Anyone who neglects or disdains it, cuts off the flower of existence to put it in a vase.

The church is here also to build up our piety, to nurture and feed it, to sustain it in its purity. We need the congregation, the offices of the church and theology to keep out the weeds of heresy that multiply quickly in the garden of piety.

Naturally, spontaneously

But we must not make that garden overly manicured. We shouldn't trim the hedges into artificial shapes, for piety needs to grow naturally and spontaneously. Our feelings and emotions, whatever goes on in the heart – these are very precious, and some of us are more at home here than others. Sometimes the way people talk about these things turn us off. But with others such talk is genuine; it comes from the heart and we listen respectfully and gratefully.

It is a shame that we have lost our ability to talk about our inner experience; we have become too down-to-earth and businesslike in our conversation. Piety has a lot to do with feelings, in fact, with the most sublime and highest of our feelings.

Piety is closely related to falling in love, to romantic feelings. Romance, too, brings out our most sublime feelings. Popular music never tires of singing about them; these songs carry on endlessly about love, but what they are talking about is passion, romance.

There is something deeply wrong with the soul of modern man that it dwells so endlessly in its songs on romance while it abhors piety.

Sublime feelings

What are the sublime feelings I have in mind? There are far too many to list them all, but they include feelings of loss, longing, concentration, stillness, reverence, dependence, independence, surrender, eagerness, expectation, obedience, wonder, thankfulness, love, joy and so on.

Such feelings become the focus of our lives. We want to feel God's presence. This is the supreme thing in life – its very end. Once in a while we are even able to achieve this high point. But only for a while. It soon comes to an end: we become sated or exhausted. The moments in which we truly feel God are very few and far between and often very short.

We can set our goals lower and speak instead of a religious dispositions or moods in which we "have" God. Or we may speak of experiences, those emotions that stir deep within us. The forms of the inner life are numerous and various and we can go on describing them forever.

But the point I want to make here is that to have a vital and pure inner life, we need to go to church, for to go to church is to be led into and through this garden, not just of salvation and being, but also of the inner life. We are taken by the hand and led to salvation in Jesus Christ, and we are brought face to face with the being of created reality. But we are also turned about and turned inward. There we encounter our selves and we discover all that goes on inside us.

Children experiencing salvation

But that's not all. Going to church is not just to be led into and guided in this inner life; it also stimulates these experiences in us. It is, therefore, important for our spiritual life that we go to church early as children. Children do not understand everything, of course; but when a child watches a bird for the first time in wide-eyed wonder, does it understand that? And isn't the whole world such a miracle?

A child experiences salvation, the depth of being and the life of the spirit in the same way when he goes to church. It makes a deep impression on him, one that he will carry with him the rest of his life. In some sense, we remain children all our lives. Our inner lives need to be stimulated again and again.

Even when we have come to some sort of stability and balance in our spiritual life, the full scope of the relationship we have with God can be sustained only by going to church regularly. Here we are confronted by its inexhaustible greatness again and again. Our own hearts are too small to store all this and keep it all safe. Only the church in its worship has the necessary capacity. It is the storehouse of our spiritual lives.

So we also go to church in order to have this described for us. This is how we are built up in our piety. We are operated on. We are turned inside out and the contents of our hearts are laid on the table.

How is this done? The first thing that comes to mind, of course, is the sermon. It must be experiential. It must be much more than this, too. It must also preach Christ, the Kingdom and the full counsel of God. But it must also touch our inner lives.

The preacher must also speak from his own experience of God. He must give evidence that he is also a pastor, that he knows people and has insight into their otherness and into the highs and lows of their lives. And he must bring his own experience and that of others into his preaching. He must also guide and shape that experience on the basis of the gospel. The inner life must be biblically streamlined.

But this doesn't take place only

in the preaching. The liturgy is also a mirror and expression, a source and norm for the inner life of the Christian. Singing, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, confession, offering, blessing, being washed and being buried, eating and drinking – all of these and more constitute the liturgy. And these are all part of our inward life as well.

We must be careful not to be one-sided. Some focus entirely on the inner experience of the individual. Others focus entirely on the liturgy, on our social being. The truth is, no doubt, somewhere in the middle.

The liturgy is a social, communal experience, but beyond this is the experience of the individual in his indissoluble solitariness. He is no less important. In the end, we die not liturgically but alone – to be then taken up into the fellowship of the church triumphant.

Why is it that piety turns people off? Is it nothing but emotionalism? Is it mere sanctimoniousness? Is it nothing but indulging in mawkish sentimentality? These are serious questions. Even more serious is the objection that piety and devotion lead us into religion as a separate sphere far away from the hurly-burly of daily life. The most telling objection, however, is that it all comes down to a flight from reality into mere poetry, illusion and self-preoccupation.

But take away piety and what is left? Only what preoccupies us all today – power, excitement, work, money, killing time, entertainment, yes, especially entertainment.

People laugh at virtue

People used to seek knowledge and enlightenment. Or they sought to be trained in virtue. Nowadays, people laugh at virtue and knowledge has been reduced to information. Above all, nowadays people want to be entertained, lost in diversion.

But if we give up on piety altogether, won't our inner lives dry

up completely? Isn't this deadly? Can a healthy society be built up from people who are restless and discontented in the depths of their hearts? I wonder whether this past century's struggle against social injustice – though right and necessary – didn't destroy the fragile fabric of the inner lives of countless Christians.

We must recover that inwardness. It is the root of human existence. We must recover the inner life of faith, of religion, devotion and piety.

It involves the "consecration" of life. It casts a holy light over all of life; it gives it not only a glow of holiness but also of glory. Without it, we live life on a lower level.

This is why we must go to church regularly – to be built up in our piety. Although, we go to church for many other reasons as well, the soul of worship concerns the human soul.

This meditation by Van Ruler was difficult to translate, for it hinged on wordplay. The Dutch verb "stichten" means to found, erect or establish something. The noun "gesticht" can be translated as institution. Yet, the adjective "stichtelijk," derived from the same word, means edifying, devotional, providing comfort and confirmation of one's faith. It was chosen by van Ruler to bring together objective and subjective dimensions of faith. A lot of the wordplay resisted translation and simply had to be sidestepped. (HdN)

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Church and the Law

Church minister serving on the church board

David A. van der Woerd

From time to time questions have been raised about the practice of a paid minister of a local church being on the board of the church he or she serves. Many churches believe that the minister must be the leader of the congregation, but what happens when this tradition conflicts with the law?

There is a perspective that says that churches are a special kind of "private" charity and that the common law prohibition is a "general policy" that applies to "public" charities, but not to churches. The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) of Ontario, however, disputes this, saying that the common-law prohibition against the remuneration of a board member of a charity is a rule of law, not a matter of 'general policy'. Churches are undoubtedly a particular kind of charity, but this does not mean they do not have to comply with charity law.

Is it possible for a church to be faithful both to the law and to its understanding of a biblical requirement that a minister must be a member of the board? Undoubtedly, but churches probably have to make administrative changes to comply. The solution that fits for one church, may not work for another.

The problem

The judicial system generally does not interfere with ecclesiastical matters. But where a church is a property owner, handles funds or is an employer, there may be conflicts between a church polity based on traditions and civil legal requirements.

Court decisions have held that ministers who serve on the governing board of their churches place themselves, and the churches they serve, at risk of legal prosecution. This is because board members of charities are considered to be volunteers who act gratuitously. They are fiduciaries who must not place their personal interests in conflict with their duties to the church. Accordingly, the courts have prevented persons who are in a position of trust and confidence from receiving remuneration without court approval, to guard against the dangers of persons being swayed by self-interest and to ensure utmost good faith and loyalty. Hence, ministers that serve on their church's board expose themselves, and their church, to the risk of legal reverberation.

The arguments

As with any controversial law, many arguments have been formulated to circumvent its application. This article addresses some of those arguments and presents some of the solutions.

Some churches have sought legal shelter by writing a provision into their bylaws authorizing the minister to serve on the board while being on the payroll, presuming that such explicit acknowledgment and ratification of the conflict of interest within the church will leave them beyond legal reproach. Unfortunately, the PGT does not agree. The PGT's stance is that a corporate bylaw does not override the law. While such a bylaw "may be required for corporate law purposes [it] does not comply with the charity law prohibition and could be considered a breach of the fiduciary duties of the directors of the charity." This position is supported in the 1951 *French Protestant Hospital* case, where a charity passed a bylaw that permitted the payment of remuneration to its directors (members of its governing board) for professional services. The Court ruled that the bylaw was invalid and ineffective.

Others have the view that it is sufficient for a minister to absent himself or herself from the debate and decision-making process in matters relating to his performance and remuneration. The courts have not supported this proposition. In the 1987 *Toronto Humane Society* case, the Court asserted that corporate safeguards of charitable organizations were not sufficient and they were therefore susceptible to being taken over by a particular person or faction. The PGT elaborated, stating that:

"in matters dealing with paid charity directors, it is not enough that the directors declare their interests, make full disclosure and not participate in the discussion or voting. While this may be required for corporate law purposes, it is not sufficient to comply with charity and trust law requirements. The Court does not wish fiduciaries to be in an ambiguous situation. The Court also cannot know whether some advantage has been appropriated by the fiduciary. It is impossible to know whether the fiduciary has influenced the other members of the board, or whether the other members are seeking to benefit for the way they vote."

Some solutions

One alternative is for churches to remove their ministers from the board and therefore remove their right to vote on board matters, chair the meetings or make motions. There are compelling legal reasons to do this, including the protection it affords ministers from certain liabilities, or shielding them from

conflict of interest or breach of trust accusations. However, if the solution were this simple, there would be no need to write further. Clearly, this approach is not a tenable solution that all churches can tolerate, viewing it as a secular affront to the longstanding religious traditions that elevate clergy in church governance.

Another option may be to designate ministers as ex-officio members of the board. The ex-officio concept has been used to confer certain powers of board members upon paid employees, such as the ability to attend and participate in directors' meetings, while withholding other powers, such as the right to vote. Some see this as no different from the watering down effect that removing paid employees from the board has. Another concern is how the ex-officio powers are defined, in that if the ex-officio director has all the authority of a director, in real or perceived terms, the designation of the employee as an ex-officio board member may be looked through as a transparency that complies with the law in form, but not in substance.

Difficulty obtaining approval

In Ontario a church that wishes to have paid personnel on its board may also seek court approval to do so under Section 13 of the *Charities Accounting Act*. To obtain this approval it must show that it is in the best interest of the church to have paid staff on the board. This provision permits a simplified out-of-court procedure to obtain court approval in non-contentious matters. The procedure requires the consent of the PGT, the charity and all of its board members. However, churches should be aware that the PGT will not give consent where there is not a demonstrable material benefit to the church and it may be difficult to demonstrate such benefit with respect to a minister's salary. No other province appears to have a simplified method to apply for court approval. The only sure way to obtain court approval in all provinces would appear to be through the formal court process.

Churches or ministers which elect to use this procedure should be cautioned that the costs for making such an application may be borne by the minister personally. If the court application process is not found to be in pursuit of the church's charitable purposes, the church may be barred from using its own resources to apply for the court approval. Also, since the process would apply only to a specific minister, the approval, if obtained, may not be transferable to other ministers.

One alternative that is worthy of consideration is to structure church governance so that property matters are assigned to one body within the church and ecclesiastical matters are assigned to another. In that way, many of the restrictions imposed by common law may be avoided. For example, a church could establish a Property Board that deals exclusively with property or general administrative and budgetary matters, leaving the Church Board, made up of elders, deacons, or other church officers, retaining authority over ecclesiastical matters. Despite difficulties that may be encountered in dividing duties in this way,

the minister could be a member of the Church Board without being a member of the Property Board. The minister's leadership role over the spiritual matters of the church, would thus be without compromise to the church's or his or her legal status.

In this model, the Church Board would remain the body that initiates all ministry programs and budgets. The Property Board would be responsible for financial matters and would give final approval for all expenditures and the use of all charitable resources. The administration of the budget would be under the supervision and control of the Property Board. The Property Board could not initiate new programs or select its preferences from among the ministry programs approved by the Church Board. The Property Board would inform the Church Board of any revenue problems and would request it to adjust the ministry programs that are within its exclusive discretion.

If this structure is implemented, the minister would be a full voting member of the Church Board. The bylaws could allow the minister to be notified of all meetings of the Property Board and permit him or her to be present and participate at the will of the chair; however, the minister, or anyone else receiving income from the local church, would not be a member of the Property Board.

Conclusion

It is possible for a church to be faithful to the law and its understanding of a biblical requirement that a minister must be a member of its board. There are solutions which can bridge the gap between some church polity and the common law. Until Regulations are enacted under the Ontario *Charities Accounting Act* permitting the remuneration of board members of a charity (which, in this political climate, is unlikely), churches must look at their structures to see if they have unwittingly placed themselves and their ministers at risk of finger-pointing for breach of trust or conflict of interest. In a recent British decision, professional fees paid by a charity to a director were ordered to be repaid. Will this happen to other board members? Churches which ignore the common law expose themselves to this possibility.

This article has been prepared for the Canadian Council of Christian Charities by David van der Woerd, a partner with Ross & McBride LLP (www.rossmcbride.com). His practice is focused on commercial and real estate law, with a special interest in charity and non-profit law. He can be reached at: 1 King Street West, P.O. Box 907, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3P6, 905-572-5803 (direct line), 905-526-0732 (fax), dvanderwoerd@rossmcbride.com

What is it to serve God
and to do his will? Nothing else
than to show mercy to our neighbor.
For it is our neighbor who needs
our service; God in heaven
needs it not. ...
Martin Luther

the Netherlands

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Litany

An Easter Dialogue: The Sinner

In the quiet —

Hear my prayer O LORD;
 Let my cry for help come to You.
 Please, please
 Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress.
 I need you.

A message in reply.

The LORD longs to be gracious to you.
 He rises to show you compassion.
 A promise:
 You will weep no more.
 How gracious the LORD will be when you cry for help.
 As soon as he hears, he will answer!

Contemplation.

My soul is downcast within me, O LORD.
 O LORD: Have mercy on me!

For I have sinned against you.
 Against you, you only, have I sinned.
 I know my transgressions, LORD.
 They are always before me.
 They speak of my brokenness.

I am weak, O LORD.
 I cannot save myself.
 Do not cast me from your presence!

The Reply.

My LORD said:
 "Come now, let us reason together.
 Though your sins are like scarlet,
 They shall be white as snow;
 Though they are red as crimson,
 They shall be like wool."

Confession.

My offences are many in your sight.
 My sins testify against me.
 Before you, I acknowledge my iniquities:
 Rebellion and treachery against the LORD.
 Fomenting repression and revolt,
 Uttering lies my heart has conceived,
 I have failed to love you, My LORD.
 I have failed to love my neighbor.
 And I have no defense.

The Plea.

Please, O LORD:
 Hide your face from my sins
 And blot out my iniquity.
 Let me hear joy and gladness.
 Let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

O my God
 I am about to fall.
 My pain is ever with me.
 I confess my iniquity.
 I am troubled by my sin.
 I need rest that only you can give.

Hear my prayer, O LORD.
 According to your promises,
 Be not deaf to my weeping.
 O LORD, do not forsake me.
 Stay close to me.
 Come quickly to help me,
 O LORD my Savior.

Mercy.

As a father has compassion on his children,
 So the LORD has compassion on me.
 He knows me intimately.
 He knows how I am formed.
 He remembers that I am dust.

Therefore, because of his great mercy,
 He does not treat me as my sins deserve.
 He does not repay me according to my iniquities.
 He does not exact payment for my debt.
 No! As far as the east is from the west,
 So far has he removed my transgressions from me.

Redemption.

The LORD sends payment for my debt.
 An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.
 A life for a life.
 His life for my life.

The witness says:

Surely he took up my infirmities
 and carried my sorrows.
 We considered him stricken by God.
 Smitten by God and afflicted.
 A tragic end to a good teacher.

But the reality is this:
 He was pierced for my transgressions.
 He was crushed for my iniquities.
 The punishment that brought me peace
 Was laid upon him.
 By his wounds, I am healed.
 Like a dumb sheep,
 I have gone my own way.
 The LORD has laid upon him
 All of my faults.

This is what the witness says about how I am saved:

He was oppressed and afflicted,
 Yet he did not open his mouth.
 He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
 As a sheep is silent before her shearers,
 So he did not open his mouth.

By oppression and judgement he was taken away.
 He was cut off from the land of the living.
 For my transgressions, he was stricken.

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
 Though he had done no violence,
 Nor was there any deceit in his mouth.

He had done nothing to deserve death,
 Yet he took death upon himself—
 The death that was rightly mine.

The witness explains the LORD's plan of salvation:

It was the LORD's will to crush him
 And to cause him to suffer.
 Though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,
 Yet he will see his offspring and prolong his Days.
 After the suffering of his soul,
 He will see the light of life and be satisfied!
 He will be the first-born of the dead!
 He will receive the keys of life and death!
 This righteous servant — Immanuel —
 God with us,
 This righteous servant will justify many.
 He will bear the iniquities of the people.



The Supper at Emmaus, oil on panel by the studio or circle of Gerrit Van Honthorst (1590-1656)

This righteous servant will be glorified.
 He will share in the spoils of the victory of life over death.
 He will be glorified because he has won the battle
 By pouring out his life unto death
 And by numbering himself with the transgressors.

The righteous servant bore the sin of many
 And made intercession for the transgressors.
 He stood in our place.

And the LORD accepts this payment
 For our debt.
 Even more—
 We share in the victory
 Over death.
 We have eternal life.

I respond.

Praise the LORD, O my Soul!
 All my inmost being,
 Praise his holy name.
 Praise the LORD, O my Soul!
 And forget not all his benefits.
 He has forgiven all my sins.
 He heals all my diseases.
 He redeems my life from the pit.
 He crowns me with love and compassion.

The LORD has lifted me out of the slimy pit.
 Out of the mud and mire.
 He set my feet on a rock
 And gave me a firm place to stand.

Praise the LORD, you his angels!
 You mighty ones that do his bidding,
 Who obey his word!
 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts!
 You his servants who do his will!
 Praise the LORD, all his works!
 Everywhere in his Dominion!

Yes, Praise the LORD, O my Soul!

Theresa Miedema sent us this Easter litany too late for the last issue, but I thought it a litany that could serve for any occasion. If you are on a worship committee, feel free to use it in your worship services. We hope to print more of such litanies in the future. Ms. Miedema is a former Bay Street lawyer now practising part-time while completing a graduate degree in law at the University of Toronto. Born and raised in the CRC, she has gone from Dutch to Scottish as she is currently attending Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto. The peppermints are not as good, but they make great porridge.

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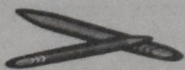
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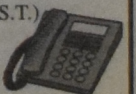
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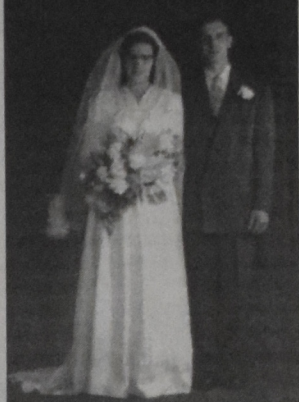
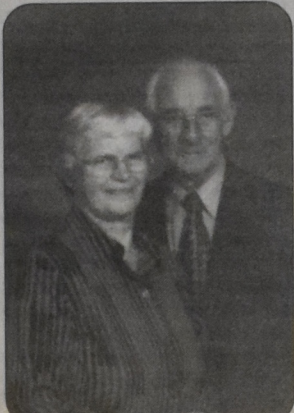


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<p>For Rent</p> <p>St. Catharines - Share house with Christian young person. Ideal for students. Available May 1, 2003. On bus route and close to Fairview Mall. Call Anita at: 905-684-5806.</p> <p>Needed someone to share house in Guelph, Christian young man, NS, ND. Available immediately. Call Brian at 519-822-4506 and leave a message.</p>	<p>Anniversaries</p> <p>The Children of</p> <p>DENNIS and TIETE KLAZINGA</p> <p>Invite You to an Open House To Celebrate their Parents 50th Wedding Anniversary Saturday, May 3, 2003 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Wyoming Christian Reformed Church 4524 Confederation Line Wyoming, Ontario Best Wishes Only</p> <p>Mailing Address: Box 965 Wyoming ON N0N 1T0</p>	 <p>1953 Nieuwe Pekela 2003 Beachburg</p> <p>With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we hope to celebrate with our parents and grandparents</p> <p>EGBERT and JANTINA DRENT (nee Muller)</p> <p>the occasion of their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 12, 2003, D.V.</p> <p>"Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and he will act." Psalm 37:5 We pray the Lord will continue to bless them in the years to come.</p> <p>Their loving children: Harma & Gerry Lof - St. Catharines Christine & Ralph Bergsma - Pembroke Margaret & Bill Schuurmans - Hallville John & Janet Drent - Brampton 10 grandchildren & 1 great-grandchild</p> <p>An Open House will be held in their honor on May 17, 2003 D.V. from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Lions Hall, Beachburg, Ontario. Best Wishes Only. Home address: 8 Elliot Street Box 323 Beachburg ON K0J 1C0</p>	<p>1952 May 6 2003</p> <p>Matthew 19:6</p> <p>HERMAN and EVELYN WERKMAN</p> <p>are celebrating their 51st Wedding Anniversary with all their children and grandchildren. <i>The Lord be Praised.</i> Mailing address: 1426 - 11445 - 135 Str Edmonton AB T5M 3M6</p>  <p>Edmonton AB Burnaby BC 1953 May 15 2003</p> <p>Psalm 128 With praise and thanksgiving to God we congratulate our parents and grandparents</p>	<p>Thankful children and grandchildren: Mike & Leonie VanderMeer Ben & Laura, Matthew & Stacey, Daniel, Rachel Stuart & Alice VanderMeer Steven, Jason, Heather, Kyle Mark & Wendy VanderMeer Yvonne, Craig, Nicole, Bryan, Michelle, Kevin, Trevor George & Betty VanderMeer Jenica, Stephanie Chris & Christine VanderMeer Alex, Autumn Home Address: 3286 Portage Road Niagara Falls ON L2J 2K2</p> <p>1963 May 10 2003</p> <p>"Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings." Psalm 63:7</p> <p>With thankfulness to God for His unfailing love and faithfulness, we joyfully announce the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our parents</p>
<p>Personals</p> <p>Are you a christian gentleman looking for a relationship with a fun-loving, family oriented woman? I am a 44 year-old divorced (for 9 years) mom of three kids ages 17,19 & 21. I'm looking for someone to share a new phase in life now that the kids are getting older. If you are a sincere, trustworthy and loving man who would enjoy spending time getting to know someone new for potential relationship please contact: File No. 2738, 1 Hiscott St St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7</p>	<p>1963 May 10 2003 Owen Sound Owen Sound</p> <p>"My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12:9</p> <p>With thanks to God for his great faithfulness we are pleased to announce the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our parents</p> <p>GEERT and ZWAANIE TERSTEEGE (nee Van Schepen)</p> <p>Congratulations from your children George & Nancy Terstegee - Arthur Amanda Johnson Curtis and Kylie Henry & Jennifer Terstegee - Neustadt Tiffany and Joshua Marsha & Robin Therkildsen - Hamilton Ariel, Jordyn, Erik Paul Terstegee - Samia Janice Moore Robert Terstegee - Toronto You are invited to share our joy at an Open House to be held at the CRC Hall in Owen Sound on May 10, 2003 from 2 - 4 p.m. Best wishes only please. Mailing address: 535 3rd St W Owen Sound ON N4K 6S7</p>	<p>1953 Jan. 30 2003 Kitchener, Ont. Kincardine, Ont.</p> <p>With Praise and Glory to God</p> <p>STEVE and SANDRA VANKRUISTUM</p> <p>invite you to celebrate with them and their family, their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Come and join us for an Open House on May 10, 2003 from 2 - 4 p.m. at the Point Clark Community Centre. Home address: RR 1 Kincardine ON N2Z 2X3</p>	<p>JOHN and LENY LOZIE (nee Barendregt)</p> <p>on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. We pray that the Lord will continue to keep you in His loving care. Congratulations! With love from your children and grandchildren: Capt. Wilfred & Caroline Lozie Goose Bay, Labrador David & Janine - Winnipeg, MB Jason, Cassandra - Winnipeg, MB Perry & Coreen Lozie - Calgary, AB Matthew, Daniel, Sarah Ralph & Elizabeth Lozie - Calgary, AB Nicole Rita & Frank Pongracz New Westminster, BC Jordan, Tyler Home address: 7633 Rosewood St Burnaby BC V5E 2G8</p>	<p>LEEN and AGATHA VAN DE BAN (nee Amsinga)</p> <p>We pray that God will continue to bless you with His love and shalom. Love and congratulations, Leo Van de Ban - Winnipeg MB Clarence & Merlene - Winnipeg MB Dennis Van de Ban Jane Van de Ban - London, England Steven Van de Ban - Napanee ON Harvey & Doreen Van de Ban Hamilton ON Brian & Angelika Regier-Van de Ban Winnipeg MB Home address: 42440 Hydro Line RR1 Seaforth ON N0K 1W0</p> 

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Obituaries



The Lord has taken to Himself from Henderson General hospital, Hamilton on Sunday March 23, 2003, our mother, oma, and great-oma in her 91st year.

ELISABETH POORTINGA
(nee Steinhuis)

of Shalom Manor, Grimsby and a former resident of Parkview Meadows, Townsend, is predeceased by her husband Pieter (Sept. 2002). Beloved mother and mother-in-law of: Andy & Rose - Woodstock; Peter & Ginny - Lockport, N.Y.; Hank & Joanne - St. Catharines; Chris & Connie - Townsend; Patricia & Greg Haskell - Jarvis; Olivia Poortinga - Burlington and the late Rita Vanbrakel (1976); Anna (nee Haveman) Poortinga (1990); Kathy Oussoren (1991) and Egbert Poortinga (2000). Loving oma of 28 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren and predeceased by great-grandson Michael (1991). Sister of Fenna, Klaas & the late Adam, Giny, Eilko, Douwe and Frederik. Friends called at Cooper Funeral Home in Jarvis, followed by a grave-side service at Knox Presbyterian Church Cemetery. A memorial service was held at Covenant Reformed Church, Balmoral. Donations to Shalom Manor or charity of your choice. Friends are invited to sign the book of condolences at: www.funeral-cast.com

"I have a home among my own people." 2 Kings 4:13b

JACOB DEKKER

of Smithville passed on peacefully to be with his Lord and Savior in his 72nd year, April 9, 2003. Jacob will be sadly missed by his loving wife Anneke (nee Bouwsema) of 45 years. Devoted father and Opa to Margriet Kruisselbrink - Erin, ON; Rebekah, Rachele, Alicia, Jaclyn and their father John Kruisselbrink; Grace & Jeff Schilstra - Smithville; Kristen (Jim) Spoelstra, Joshua, Brenda, Melissa; Jake & Fran Dekker - Smithville; Cassandra, Scott, Adam, Amy Henry & Sandy Dekker - Georgetown; Aaron, Danielle, Mark; Phillip & Sandra Dekker - Wellandport; Jessica, Christopher, Samuel Douglas & Janelle Dekker - Smithville; Rylie. Also survived by his brothers & sisters: Henk & Leny Dekker - Strathroy; Clarence & Jane Dekker - Chatham; Eef & Dries Nyhuis, Tryn & Henk Kuizinga, Anneke Dekker, Piet & Tinny Dekker, Geertjan & Lies Dekker - all of the Netherlands.

A memorial service was held Mon. April 14, 2003 at 11 a.m. at the Smithville Christian Reformed Church with Rev. DeJong officiating. Interment Union Cemetery, Smithville. Memorial contributions to the charity of your choice would be appreciated by the family.

Correspondence address:
6218 Regional Rd 614
Smithville ON L0R 2A0

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me,
Your rod and staff they comfort me."
Psalm 23:4.

April 6, 1940 March 25, 2003
Maasland, Holland Renfrew, Ontario

We are thankful that God has called home, after many years of patient suffering

RIET HUYER (Van Dorp)

We believe that her heavenly home far surpasses any that she often envisioned. Husband: Hubert. Children and grandchildren: Jim & Roxanne Huyer; Andy & Karen Huyer; Callum; Jack & Dorothy Huyer; Courtney, Raymond, Jonathan, Katrina, Adrian; Val & Regan Riopelle; Fern, Justin, Jelaina, Erica, Kelsie, Jeremy; Mark & Angela Struyk-Huyer; Catrina, Levi, Gabriel; Lisa Huyer; Sierra, Savannah; Marianne & Owen Smith; Olivia, Adam. Great-grandchild: Brianna (Fern). Correspondence address: H. Huyer RR #1, Burnstown ON K0J 1G0

"He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." John 11:25

At L.H.G. St. Joseph's Hospital on Wed. March 26, 2003

TED (Theodore) SOEPBOER

at the age of 47 was taken into glory. Much loved husband of Sue (Davidson) Soepboer. Devoted dad of Teddy, Eric & Justine. Beloved son of the "late Ted" (2001) and Audrey Soepboer. He was greatly loved and will be missed by his brothers & sisters and their families: Bill & Mary Soepboer - Oyen, AB; Harry & Gwen Soepboer - Stratford; Nick & Willie Doombosch - Forest; Freda Schneider - Samia; Harold & Brenda Soepboer - Forest; Audrey Penford - Samia. He was a dear son and brother-in-law to Norm & Muriel Davidson, Cindy, Judy and their families. A Celebration Service was held at Forest United Church, James Street North, Forest on Sat. March 29 with Pastor Pete Vanderbeek officiating. Interment was at Hillsboro Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a trust fund for education purposes of Teddy, Eric and Justine. (Cheques to be made out to "Ronnie E. Dodge in Trust" or if preferred to the Canadian Cancer Society.)

For Sale

Prosperous 50-year-old business for sale. The store is located in **Edmonton** and specializes in Dutch goods, butcher shop, dry goods, giftware. Interested parties contact:

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Edmonton AB T5S 1E5

Events

Join us as we celebrate
the faithful service in Christian education of:

**Coby Koene (39 years) and
George Vandezande (38 years)**

at a

**RETIREMENT CELEBRATION
OPEN HOUSE**

May 24, 2003

7 p.m. Open House begins
(8 p.m. program)

Beacon Christian Elementary School

300 Scott St. St. Catharines, Ontario L2N 1J3

Contributions to a memory book (pictures, stories, memories, etc.)

are encouraged! Please submit by May 9.

If unable to attend, please send greetings by May 23.

esoffice@beaconchristian.org

Congratulations to

Pastor Ron Fisher who is retiring after 34 years of faithful service in the ministry. Trenton Ebenezer C.R.C. is honoured to celebrate this occasion on May 4, 2003. Pastor Ron has served the congregations of Brooks, Alta., Transcona, Winnipeg, Chatham and Whitby, Ontario.

Ebenezer wishes

Pastor Ron and Gerry the Lord's blessings in the coming years.

**For
job opportunities
in our recent
issues, check out
our website at:
www.christiancourier.ca**

Job Opportunities

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www.cccr.on.ca

a vibrant, growing and youthful church, is looking for a

Full Time Youth Leader/Pastor
Must have experience and ability in building relationships with youth, helping them to grow in faith and service to our Lord. Requires a College/University degree. Ordination an asset. Please apply by May 15, 2003. Kitchener is a diverse, growing, metropolitan area with three thriving College/Universities.

Contact: Fred Vanderheide

Ph: 519-743-6673

E-Mail: vdheide@golgenet.net

or **Claire Elgersma:**

Ph: 519-578-2508

E-mail:

rayelgersma@sympatico.ca

Dordt College Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

Agriculture

Oversee the operation of Dordt's 200-acre Agriculture Stewardship Center, teach selected agriculture and biosystems courses, and contribute to the development of a new biotechnology initiative.

Theatre Arts

Faculty/staff position in design.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA
51250-1697

Fax: 712 722-4496

E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu

Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs.

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.



Hamilton District Christian High School requires VICE-PRINCIPAL OF STUDENTS

The Board of Directors of Hamilton District Christian High School invites qualified administrators or teachers, with a minimum of 4 years teaching or related experience, to apply for the position of Vice Principal of Students. The successful candidate will require the following attributes:

- A clear understanding of and a passion for a transformational vision of Christian Education
- A heartfelt desire to bring the lordship of Jesus Christ to all areas of life
- A commitment to demonstrate servant leadership with a large dedicated staff and an established administrative team
- Excellent communication, organizational, and team building skills
- Strong interpersonal and relationship skills with young people
- A consistent, loving, restorative justice approach to discipline

Interested candidates should address letters of application, resumes and/or questions to:

George Van Kampen, Principal Hamilton District Christian High School
92 Glancaster Rd, Ancaster, ON, L9G 3K9

Telephone: 905-658-6655 E-mail: gvankampen@hdch.org

For further information please check the job page on our web site: www.hdch.org

Classifieds

Teachers

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

in Windsor, Ontario,

a K-12 school, is accepting applications for a Resource position, French and Grade 2 Maternity.

Computer literate teachers who demonstrate a vibrant Christian walk are encouraged to apply.

Contact us to receive a Maranatha Application Form; then send the completed form & complete resume to:

William Van Dyke, Principal

Maranatha Christian Academy

939 Northwood St., Windsor, ON N9E 2B4

Phone: 519-966-7424 **Fax:** 519-966-9519**Email:** office@maranathachristian.ca**CHATHAM, Ontario**Chatham Christian High School invites **teachers**, who demonstrate a passionate love for God and young people, to join our team. We are a growing school in a modern facility, supported by a strong Christian community. We seek applications for the 2003-2004 school year for a definite opening in **Art/English**.

Please address your letter of application and resume to:

John Van Pelt

Chatham Chr. High School

475 Keil Dr. South

Chatham ON N7M 6L8

Ph: 519-352-4980

Fx: 519-352-4041

E-mail:

johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

Job Opportunities

ASSOCIATE PASTOR**New Life Church,**

a dynamic, cell-based, contemporary and multi-staff church in Abbotsford, British Columbia, is looking for a full-time associate pastor. Are you someone who loves to preach, who loves to equip others for leadership, and who loves people? If you are, and you are able to function at a senior staff level in a team environment - then we want to hear from you!

Please send your enquiries &/ or resume, to: **Elsie Bakker****ebakker@newlife.crc.ca****or fax 604-852-1554****OTTAWA CALVARY****THIS IS OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE:**CALVARY CRC OF OTTAWA-EAST is looking for a **Pastor**. Our church is located about 10 min. from Parliament Hill. We are a mix of rural and urban families, with a total of 424 members. Does your preaching and one-on-one interactions with people challenge them to grow spiritually, preparing them for outreach and a godly life? Are you a caring, pastoral person who visits the sick and others in need, and deals well with crisis situations? Are you effective in working with young people? Are you a good leader who encourages others to develop their gifts? If so, then **you may be exactly the person we need** as our new Pastor.*For a complete church profile or any other inquiries, please contact John Cook (phone: (613)745-5914; e-mail: johngcook@sprint.ca).***WESTMOUNT CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH,**in beautiful Strathroy, Ontario, is searching for a **Director of Music (part time)**. We are praying and looking for a Director of Music who: is able to lead worship on a keyboard, is familiar with traditional hymns and contemporary songs, is willing to lead - be part of - a praise team and is comfortable in team ministry.

For more information, please contact Renata Nydam, church office (519-245-2430) Email address: wrc@sympatico.ca

Mailing address: 405 Drury Lane, Strathroy, ON, N6G 3G2.

Job Opportunities

YOUTH DIRECTOR/PASTOR

The three Christian Reformed Churches of

Sarnia, Ontario are seeking a **full time Youth Director/Pastor** to continue a unique and exciting combined youth ministry. Solid programming & committed volunteer leadership is already in place. Candidate must have strong relational and administrative skills plus the desire and ability to lead and equip our youth, helping them to grow in faith and service to our Lord.*Please send resume and inquiries to:***Art Capelle,****2261 Confederation Sarnia ON N7T-7H3****519-337-4660 or email: artc@rivernet.net****Senior Pastor****The First Christian Reformed Church of Chilliwack**

located 60 miles/ 100 kilometres east of Vancouver, BC, in the beautiful Fraser Valley, seeks a Senior Pastor for our congregation of 580 members. We pray that the Lord will provide a pastor who can, by solid biblical preaching and by example, help us toward our goal of "helping people to know and serve Jesus". Our Sunday services are changing gradually from traditional to more contemporary, with growing member participation. The Senior Pastor will have a significant voice in the calling of an associate pastor as we proceed with plans to develop an effective team ministry. For a job description and a church profile please contact our Search Committee Chairman,

Norman Brouwer at 604-792-9380or email: **normbrouwer@hotmail.com****DURHAM CHRISTIAN HOMES INC.**

Invites applications for

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**The Organization:**

Durham Christian Homes is committed to provide shelter, care and recreation for seniors allowing them to enjoy an active life within a Christian community. Operating 250 self contained seniors' apartments, many eligible for Rents Geared to Income, Durham Christian Homes Inc. is planning to expand through the addition of a long term care facility and more housing units at its present site in Whitby, Ontario.

Position Summary:

The Executive Director supervises the administration, organization and management of the housing component, including adherence to relevant government regulations. The Executive Director will develop program directions and policies for the existing housing. The position will be available by September 1, 2003 as understudy and as Executive Director by January 1, 2004.

The Individual:

- Committed to fulfilling the vision of the organization
- A degree in business administration with further education in the health or social work field, combined with 3-5 years in management experience
- Good understanding of Tenant Protection Act and familiarity of Long Term Care programs
- Excellent leadership, organizational, conflict resolution and problem solving skills
- Knowledge of the community served and the ability to interact with its members
- Strong verbal and written skills
- Relevant computer literacy

Compensation:

Salary is commensurate with qualifications, experience and position requirements

Please submit your resume by mail, fax or email by noon, May 20, 2003 to

Search Committee**Durham Christian Homes Inc.****100 Glen Hill Drive South****Whitby, Ontario L1N 8R4****Tel: (905) 430-1666; Fax: 905-430-1741 Email: dchomes@on.aibn.com**

We appreciate all responses. However, only applicants chosen for an interview will be contacted.

Half Time Ministries**Coordinator** - New position in **Classis Toronto**.

Classis Toronto is seeking a high energy, Spirit driven leader. The coordinator will be responsible to work with local churches by promoting ministry opportunities. The successful applicant should have a passion for empowering the church, be a self-starter able to work within a flexible schedule, have web management skills and the ability to communicate effectively with congregations and ministry partners.

For further job description and submission of resume contact

Rev. Nick Overduin, Stated Clerk, at**416-938-9520 or email nickoverdn@aol.com.**Deadline for resumes is **June 15/03.**

Classifieds

Job Opportunity

Teacher Placement Ad

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Willowdale Christian School

A school desiring to continue in the Reformed tradition invites applications for a full time position in

Special Education

to commence September 2003. Candidates with a CSTC will be given preference.

Please address your questions or your letter of application and resume along with a statement of faith and your philosophy of education

to: Ms Jansen, Principal
Willowdale Christian School
60 Hilda Avenue
North York ON M2M 1V5
Tel: 416-222-1711
Fax: 416-222-1939

Miscellaneous

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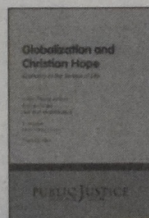
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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

- Apr 25** 27th Annual Ontario Christian High School Choral Festival, choirs from Beacon, Chatham, Hamilton, London, Nepean, Toronto featured individually and as a Mass Choir. Centenary United Church, Hamilton (next to Hamilton Place).
- Apr 26** Forest Christian Reformed Church in Forest, Ontario, will celebrate 50 years of blessings. Program will begin at 6:30 PM with Open House to follow. Dinner tickets are available. Call (519)786-4082.
- Apr 26** Spring Concert of Praise by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Leendert Kooij director, Andre Knevel, organ; in the King St. United Church, **Trenton** @ 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$10, Children under 12 - Free. Call (613)392-4110
- Apr 26** Festival of Praise for Male Choirs. Redeemer University College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, ON. \$15 per person. Ph: 905-389-2104
- Apr 26** FESTIVAL OF PRAISE CONCERT at Temple Baptist Church, **Sarnia** 4 southwestern male choruses (west division) participating. Guest choir "Chatham - Kent male choir". Special music by "One Voice" from Sarnia Concert at 7:30 PM Tickets \$10.00. Call Bill Boomsma 519 383 0805 or Henk Visser 519 542 9958
- Apr 26** **Salem**, 40 years of service, evening of celebration & praise with Grace & Colleen, Unity Music Ministries 7 - 8:30 p.m. at Faith CRC, **Burlington**, Ont.
- Apr 26, 27** Zion Christian Reformed Church, **Pembroke**, Ont., 50th anniversary. Sat. - tea social, banquet, evening program. Sun. - thanksgiving service. Call (613) 582-3263 for info & banquet. See ad Mar.3 issue.
- May 2** Come and Enjoy the combined talents of the Ottawa-Carleton Male Choir, the Men of Note of Clinton and soprano: Renee Stalenhoeft Friday, 8 p.m. in the **Clinton** CRC. Admission: Adults \$10, 12 & under \$5. Proceeds to World Vision
- May 3** Calvin Christian School, 547 West 5th St. **Hamilton**, Ont. Celebrating 50th anniversary. Open house at the school from 11a.m. - 3 p.m. Dinner at Michelangelo's Banquet Ctr. At 6:30 p.m. \$40.00 pp. Social at 5:30. To order tickets, send names & cheque to Ena Mostert, 22 Ambassador Dr. Hamilton, ON L9C 2N8
- May 3** Sarnia Christian School, **Sarnia**, Ont. 50th anniversary. 2-4 p.m. - open house. Dinner/program 5:30 Contact 519-383-7750 or odolphi@lkdsb.net See ad March 3 issue.
- May 3** Liberation Choir Concert, Hamilton Place, **Hamilton** with Guelph Symphony Orchestra. 7:30 pm. See ad
- May 3** PRO MUSICA CHOIR Conductor: Brent Fifield. Concert: Mozart's Coronation Mass, 8. p.m. Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, 607 Dunes Rd. **Burlington** ON Special guests: Ensemble de L'Estocart, will sing settings of Genevan Psalms. Adults \$12; Seniors/Students \$10; Family \$30 Add \$2 at door. For Info call: 905
- May 3, 4** First CRC, of **Orillia**, Ont. 50th Anniversary. For info & dinner tickets, call Andy Mast 705-484-9976 e-mail andrew.mast@sympatico.ca or Jackie Taylor 705-325-0161
- May 3, 4** The Calvin Christian Reformed Church of **Ottawa**, Ont. 50 year anniversary. Weekend activities include a dinner, program, services. For info: 613-225-2889 or email: office@calvincrc.ca See ad Mar 31 issue
- May 10, 11** Beth-El CRC 365 Queen St. E. **Acton**, Ontario, 50th anniversary. Sat. 3:00 p.m. for a Social Hour, then a banquet & evening program. Sunday - special thanksgiving service. For info: 519-853-0991 E-mail kenk@maple.ca (RSVP re Banquet)
- May 16, 17, 18** The Maranatha Christian Reformed Church of **Edmonton**, Alberta, 50th anniversary For more info, visit our website: members.shaw.ca/maranatha_edmonton.50th/ For banquet tickets call Edie Boonstra at 780-477-8617 or email: maranatha_edmonton.50th @shaw.ca
- May 17, 18** The CRC, **Medicine Hat, AB**, 50th anniversary. Saturday, registration at 10 a.m., banquet at 1:30 p.m. & a program at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, special services at 10 a.m. & 6 p.m. Ph: 403-526-5522 or email Bill: wmslof@telusplanet.net
- June 28, 29** All Nations CRC, **Halifax**, hosts 50th Anniversary celebration. See ad on this issue for details.

Events

The **FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH** of **ORILLIA**, Ontario Canada will be celebrating their **50th Anniversary**.

A weekend of fellowship, fun, and thanksgiving is planned on **May 3** at 2 p.m. with dinner starting at 6 p.m.

All former and present members and friends are welcome to join us in this celebration.

For more information and dinner tickets,

call Andy Mast :705-484-9976, email: andrew.mast@sympatico.ca or Jackie Taylor: 705-325-0161, P.O. Box 291Orillia, ON L3V 3T9

ALL NATIONS CRC is hosting a **50th Anniversary** celebration of God's faithfulness with Christian Reformed Ministry to Dutch Immigrants. This celebration coincides with the 75th commemorative anniversary of Dutch Immigration at the National Historical Site **Pier 21** in **Halifax**. Join us at All Nations CRC: Sat. **June 28th** 9 am Pancake Brunch and Sun. June 29th 10am Worship Celebration.

For more information call **902-429-7136** or www.allnationscrc.org.

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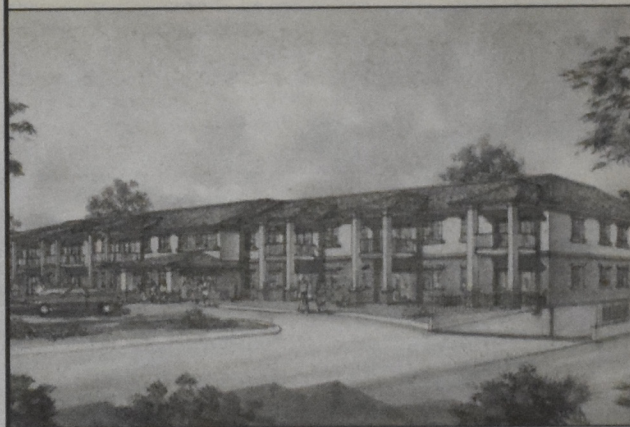
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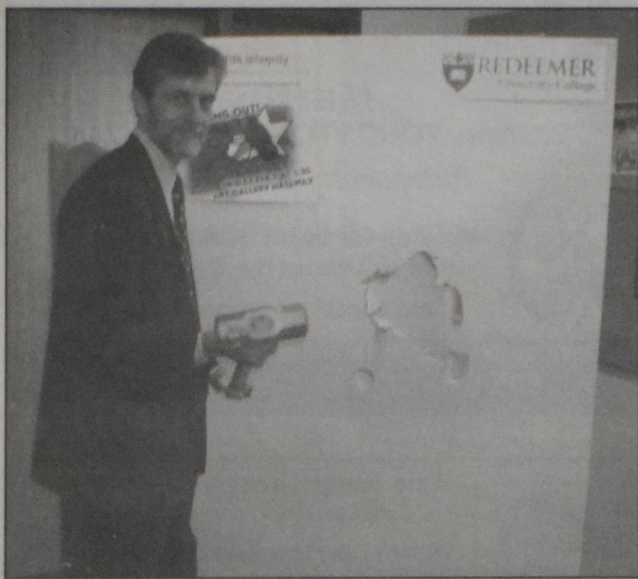
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Proceeds to World Vision

News

Redeemer starts expansion program with a bang



Dr. Justin Cooper, president of Redeemer University College, smashes a wall to symbolize the start of a new construction program.

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, Ont. – Redeemer University College started off its new expansion program with a bang recently. On February 7, Dr. Justin Cooper, president of Redeemer, swung a golden sledgehammer through a mock wall, symbolizing the start of a new three-year, \$19-million construction campaign.

At the wall-breaking ceremony were students, staff and faculty of Redeemer, as well as the Board of Governors and local MPP Ted McMeekin.

Growing with Integrity is the name given to the capital campaign which will finance the new construction. Cooper is confident that the campaign is prudent and will resonate with existing and potential supporters, reports Redeemer's *Images* newsletter. "We are committed to a model that will allow us to maintain a high quality university education with fiscally responsible planning."

Largest capital campaign

Growing with Integrity is the largest capital campaign in the university's history. The first phase of construction will cost \$7.6 million, of which \$1 million has already been raised or pledged. This phase will involve modifying 3,800 square feet of existing space and adding another 3,800 square feet on the east side of the main building. Extra space will be given to the music, art and athletic departments, with more floor space for food services. A new two-storey south wing will expand library and information services facilities, and offer more classroom and faculty office space. A northwest wing will add multi-purpose rooms and an

emergency vehicle access.

Major student increase expected

One reason for this campaign is Redeemer expects a large increase in number of students over the next few years. Currently, there are about 720 students, but Cooper tells *Christian Courier* he expects that number to rise to as many as 850 students this fall. "We expect to have a 20 to 25 per cent increase in the first year class" this fall, he asserts – from 218 frosh students last fall to 290 or more this year.

The university hopes to have 1,000 students by 2005. "We are committed to growing with integrity," says Cooper. "As we move toward 1,000 students, it is essential that we continue to offer a strong liberal arts and science education that produces principled, passionate and prepared graduates."

One reason for the increase is the double cohort of students who will be graduating from Ontario's high schools this year. But Cooper notes, "The growth we're looking at is not just due to the double cohort. . . . More students are choosing Christian universities."

Government partnership

Redeemer's capacity to grant Bachelor of Arts degrees is another factor "that has pushed us forward" and led to more growth, says Cooper. On the horizon for Redeemer is permission to grant Bachelor of Education degrees, which expects to come soon.

Historically, Redeemer has been

independently funded – receiving no government funding, relying instead on the support of individuals, business partners, and churches. But Phase 3 of the growth campaign will mark a change to that. Mark Van Beveren, Redeemer's director of communications, explains that the university is applying for \$4 million in infrastructure improvement funds from the Ontario government's SuperBuild program. This is "the first partnership-type effort" of its kind, he says. The university will need to match that \$4 million.

The Ontario government describes SuperBuild, on its web site, as a program which makes multi-year investments in public infrastructure to renew and expand the province's colleges, universities, hospitals, community centres and highways. Already, the government has invested about \$15 billion in more than 4,000 capital projects.

The university has appointed Rita Klein-Geltink and Steve Ruddick as co-directors of the Growing with Integrity campaign. Klein-Geltink has worked for nine years with Redeemer, most recently as manager of gift planning, and has four family members enrolled as students at Redeemer.

Ruddick works with CHTV as a television anchor and sports producer. His familiarity with the Greater Hamilton area stems from his media experience and involvement as a volunteer in several local organizations, reports a university press release.

Vital community role

Hamilton's Mayor Bob Wade is serving as honorary chairman of the campaign. "I value the important role that Redeemer University College plays in our city and the entire surrounding community," said Wade in a Redeemer newsletter. "Redeemer excels in preparing committed and dedicated graduates who go on to become highly qualified, ethical individuals and professionals – helping to shape the community of tomorrow. Redeemer also makes a significant contribution to the local economy and greatly enhances arts, cultural and recreational opportunities for all who live here."

Another source of funding is the Redeemer Foundation, which is underwriting all administrative expenses of the capital campaign. "We are blessed to have the foundation assist us," says Cooper in *Images*. "It allows us to direct every dollar raised to increasing the capacity of our campus so that we can meet the needs of the larger number of students who are seeking a Christ-centred university education."

News Digest

Time off to rob bank

IZEGEM, Belgium (Ananova) – A Belgian man asked his boss for an hour off work so he could rob a bank. Frederic Mestdach, 30, told his boss he needed to do some shopping in Izegem, reports *Het Laatste Nieuws*. But instead he borrowed a colleague's bike and rode to the Axa bank and robbed it at knife-point.

After the robbery, Mestdach cycled back to work and was back behind his desk within the hour. But he had been identified and one hour later police came to arrest him. They found the money in his office. A judge in Kortrijk jailed Mestdach for four years.

Strange signs

Sometimes signs can be very confusing and unintentionally funny. Here are some examples taken from English-usa.net/humor-jokes:

On a ski lift in Taos, NM: "No jumping from the lift. Survivors will be prosecuted."

Official sign near door: "Door Alarmed." Hand-printed sign nearby: "Window frightened."

In a Copenhagen airline ticket office: "We take your bags and send them in all directions."

In a Budapest zoo: "Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty."

In a Tokyo shop: "Our nylons cost more than common, but you'll find they are best in the long run."

Two signs found on top of one another in a country kitchen several years ago:

Restrooms
Please wait for hostess to seat you

Two signs from a Majorcan shop: "English well talking." "Here speaking American."

In an Athens hotel: "Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 a.m. and 11 a.m."

From a hotel in Belgrade: "This lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable."

In Turkey: "Because of a fallibility in our phone system, for room service step outside your door and shout 'ROOM SERVICE?'"

In a Tokyo hotel: "Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing is please not to read notis."



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